

MALLET DU PAN  
AND THE FRENCH  
REVOLUTION  
BERNARD MALLET





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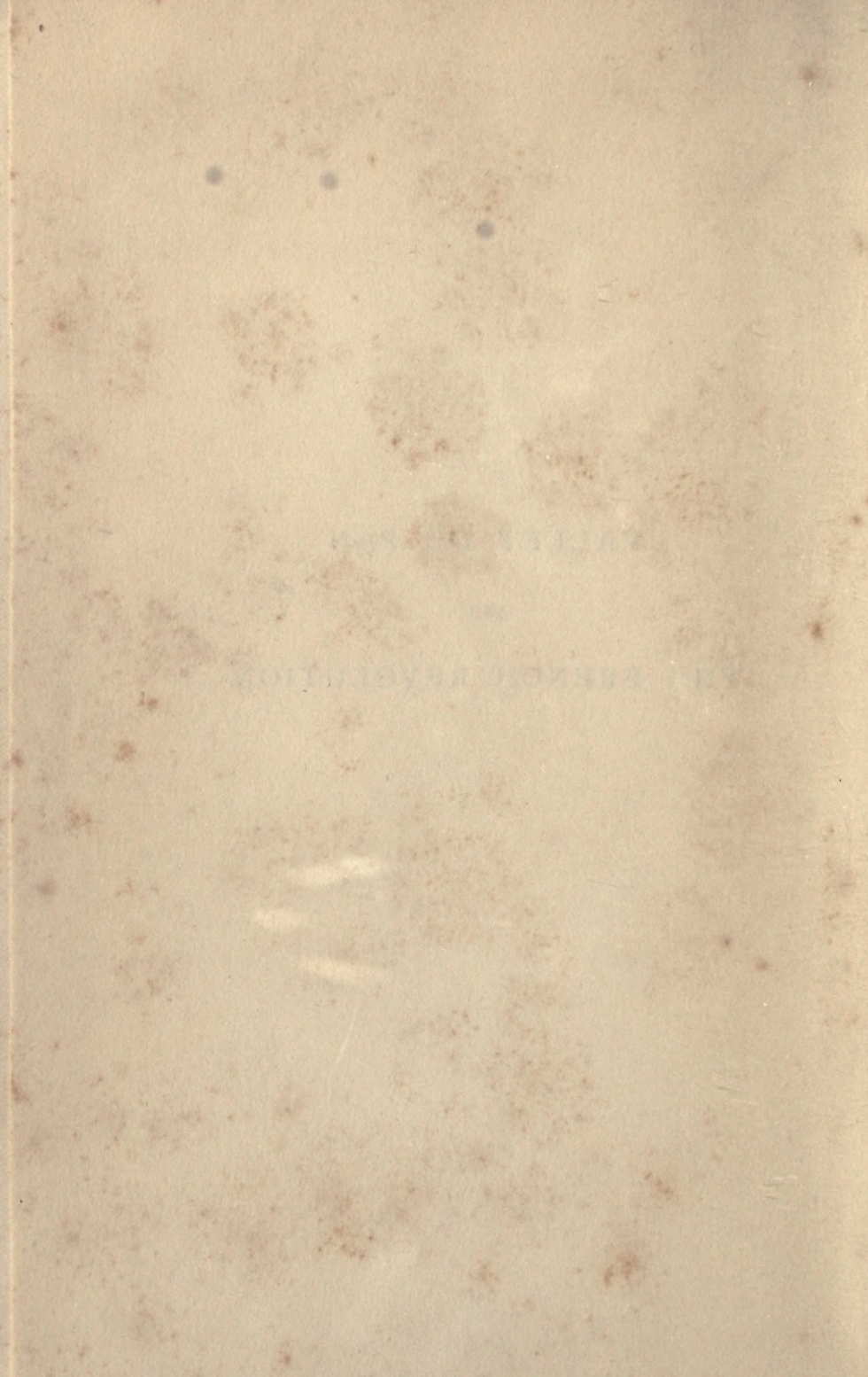


MALLET DU PAN

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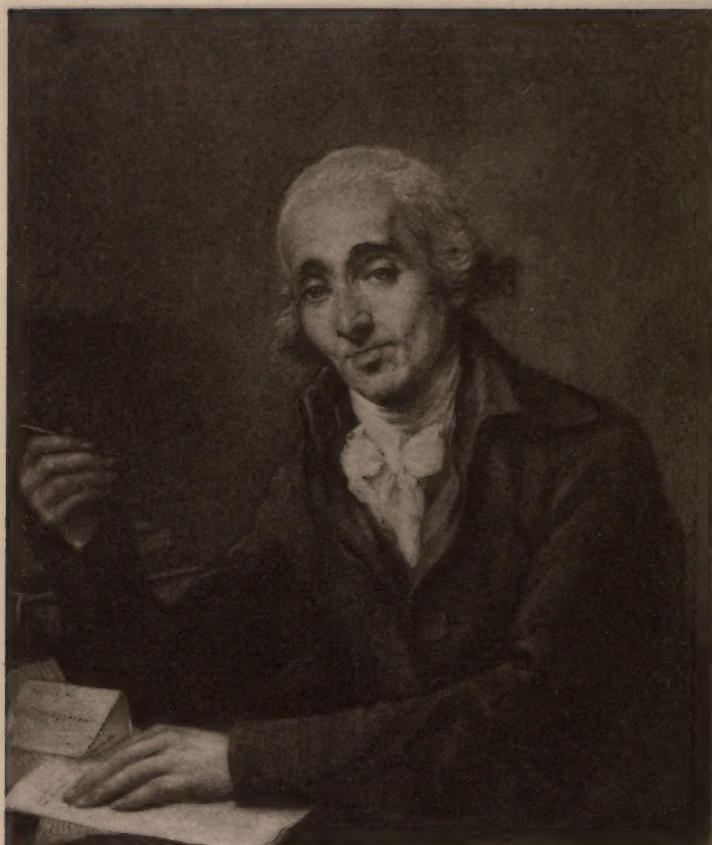












J. F. Rigaut. R. A. pinx.

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Mallet du Sart



**MALLET DU PAN** AND  
THE FRENCH REVOLUTION,  
BY BERNARD MALLET

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## TO MR SONS,

*in the hope that they may learn to value the character of their ancestor with his "simplicity and integrity," his "robust clear and manful intellect" and "the quiet valour that defies all fortune" as Carlyle portrayed him ; and that they may one day read this record of his life's work in the spirit of the following lines from Gibbon's Autobiography, which have often been in my mind in compiling it.*

*"For my own part, could I draw my pedigree from a general, a statesman, or a celebrated author, I should study their lives with the diligence of filial love. In the investigation of past events our curiosity is stimulated by the immediate or indirect reference to ourselves."*





## P R E F A C E.

NEITHER the natural interest nor the possession of literary materials which I have inherited as a great-grandson of Mallet du Pan would have justified me in undertaking an account of his career for English readers if that career had been destitute of historical importance, or if any such account had been in existence which was complete and at the same time accessible. On both these grounds, however, some justification for the present attempt may, I think, be pleaded. It will be sufficient, in this place, to refer to the emphatic testimony of authorities like Carlyle, Sainte-Beuve and Taine to the position of this once celebrated political writer as a pioneer of modern journalism, as a champion of constitutional Monarchy in the Revolution, as a confidential adviser of Louis XVI. and of the Allied Courts ; and a few words only will be needed to explain, with the assistance of the appended list of sources of information, how matters stand with regard to existing publications.

In spite of all that has been written about Mallet du Pan during the last half century, it would not be easy even for a French reader to lay his hand on any book, with the exception of M. Valette's short but admirable monograph, which gives a comprehensive view of his

work and opinions, and of the verdict of modern historical criticism upon his writings. Those writings lie buried in dozens of newspaper volumes and pamphlets and, leaving aside the political correspondence for the Court of Vienna, they are practically unobtainable at the present day. The biography by M. Sayous, in which portions of his published work together with his private correspondence appeared, was written before the recovery of the Vienna correspondence; it is, therefore, to that extent incomplete, and it has long been out of print. Finally, the rehabilitation of the publicist's reputation having been a gradual process, the *pièces justificatives* are scattered over a considerable number of volumes and articles which it is necessary to consult. Such very briefly is the position in France; in England nothing whatever has been published about Mallet du Pan except two articles in the *Edinburgh Review*, notwithstanding that he wrote continually on English affairs from the War of American Independence onwards, and that his political point of view was largely the result of his English studies and sympathies.

The name of his son, John Lewis Mallet (1775-1861), so often recurs in the following pages that a word or two about his subsequent career may possibly be of interest. His life, devoid as it is of external incident, presents a striking contrast to that of the father whose stormy destiny he had shared in his youth. Remaining in this country after the early death of Mallet du Pan, he held during the greater part of the half century which followed the same



office in the English Civil Service. In 1800 he was appointed by Mr. Pitt to a subordinate post under the Board of Audit, and shortly afterwards promoted to the Secretaryship from which he retired in 1849. He was twice married, first to a daughter of Mr. Charles Baring, youngest brother of the first Sir Francis Baring, and after her death, without children, to Miss Frances Merivale. Although a foreigner by birth, and a man of fastidious and retiring disposition, he won for himself a high place in the regard of his friends, among whom were several men distinguished in politics and literature. In his earlier years indeed he lived a good deal in the society of public men, principally, as his diaries with their mention of names like those of Romilly, Mackintosh, Lord Grenville, Lord Holland, Lord Lansdowne, Tierney, Brougham, the Barings and Francis Horner seem to show, among the Whigs. He was, with Ricardo and James Mill, one of the founders of the Political Economy Club; but with the exception of his official work he took no part in public affairs, and rather shunned than sought the recognition which his sound judgment and literary ability might have won for him. His leisure was occupied by social intercourse, by reading and correspondence, and by the habit of committing to commonplace books and diaries his criticisms of men and books and his observations on passing events, both public and domestic. His second son, the late Sir Louis Mallet, from whom the above account is derived, has left a description of his character :—

“ My father possessed, in common with his sister,

Madame Colladon, the quality which is only expressed by the word 'distinction'. In his manner he retained much of the polished courtesy and graceful forms of the older French school, while traces of his English training were evident in the simplicity and repose habitual to well-bred Englishmen. His extensive reading and varied tastes, the interesting experiences of his life and the good sense and moderation of his opinions, together with his warm and ready sympathies, gave to his conversation a peculiar charm, enhanced by his refined and critical aversion to careless and slovenly forms of expression. Although so unlike him in many respects, he inherited from Mallet du Pan his perfect integrity and noble independence of character. No man was ever more free from all taint of self-seeking or worldliness, or presented a happier combination of liberality and sound economy, or cultivated with greater success reasonable and moderate views of human life."

Mr. J. L. Mallet was the author of an autobiographical sketch, discovered a few years since among the family papers and privately printed by Sir Louis Mallet, from which I have quoted freely under the title of "Reminiscences," especially for the later years from 1793, when the writer rejoined his family after absences in England and Geneva for the purpose of education and business. The autobiography is written in an attractive style in English, and gives a narrative of the life and wanderings of Mallet du Pan during the Revolution, and his final settlement in England. With its comments on political events and its description of people and places it supplies to some extent both the personal detail and the general



atmosphere which are so invaluable in biography, and which without it would be so greatly wanting in the present case.

For Mallet du Pan himself, pre-occupied as he was with public affairs, had little leisure, and with all his power as a writer but little taste, for dwelling on the purely personal or picturesque details of the dramatic events of which he was a witness. His story has, indeed, as a study of character a deep human interest, the interest attaching to a consistent and courageous struggle against overwhelming odds. But it is as a study of opinions, as a record and analysis of political thought and action, that an account of Mallet du Pan has its main value. For this reason, and because the point of view from which the well-worn subject of the French Revolution is treated in his writings is still perhaps comparatively unfamiliar, it has been absolutely necessary to deal more largely than I should otherwise have desired to do with the historical circumstances which form the setting to the character and ideas I have had to describe.

I should like, in conclusion, to express my grateful acknowledgment to my uncle, the Rev. Henry F. Mallet, the only surviving grandson of Mallet du Pan, for his advice and assistance while this volume was in the press, and for having some years ago given into my charge the family papers and the fine portrait which is reproduced as a frontispiece.

B. M.





## LIST OF AUTHORITIES.

- A. *Family Papers*. Consisting of letters from Mallet du Pan, his friends and numerous correspondents ; private note-books kept by Mallet du Pan, drafts of various official memoranda, and letters from the Duke of Brunswick and Comte d'Artois. These have been through the hands of MM. Sayous and André Michel.

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- B. Newspapers edited by Mallet du Pan :—

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*Mallet du Pan et la Révolution Française.* By M. Gaspard Valette. Geneva, 1893. 100 pages.

E. Some Articles and Essays on the subject:—

"Causeries du Lundi." Two articles by Sainte-Beuve (1852). Vol. IV.

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Article in *Edinburgh Review*. April 1852.

Article in *Edinburgh Review*. January 1885. (As the writer of this article I have been allowed by Messrs. Longmans, Green, & Co. to incorporate a portion of it in one of my chapters. A letter from Thomas Carlyle to Mr. J. L. Mallet dated 31st October 1851 (quoted in Chapter X.) was first published in this article.)

F. The general Histories and Biographies are too numerous and too well known to need mention. The following, however, have been of special use to me :—

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# CONTENTS.

## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY LIFE, 1749-1780.

	PAGE
Settlement of the Mallet Family in Geneva—Ancestry and Parentage of Jacques Mallet du Pan—Education and Early Influences—Geneva in the Eighteenth Century and Influence of Voltaire—Political Disturbances at Geneva, in which Mallet takes part on Popular Side—Mallet at Ferney, at Cassel—His Marriage— <i>Doutes sur l'éloquence</i> —His Political Attitude—Linguet and the <i>Annales Politiques</i> —Mallet's Start and Character as a Journalist or Contemporary Historian—His Judgments on Voltaire and the <i>Philosophes</i> —Rousseau . . . . .	1

## CHAPTER II.

### WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, 1780-1782.

General Observations in the <i>Annales</i> on European Politics in Eighteenth Century—France and England in 1781—Influence of the Party System on the Conduct of the American War—Unpatriotic Conduct of Whig Factions—Results of the War .	28
---	----

## CHAPTER III.

### WORK IN PARIS, 1783-1789.

Fresh Troubles in Geneva, 1780-1782— <i>Mémoires Historiques</i> —Panckoucke and French Journalism—Mallet du Pan offered Editorship of Political Portion of <i>Mercur de France</i> —Settles in Paris 1783—Life and Work in Paris—Development of Mallet's Opinions—Description of the <i>Mercur</i> —Comments on Events in Foreign Countries—Commercial Treaty with England—Trial of Warren Hastings—The Censorship and French Politics—Holland—Vergennes—Montmorin—Mallet's
--

	PAGE
Independence—His Notes on Condition of Paris before the Revolution—Journalists—Calonne—Vergennes—Anecdotes—Political Situation in 1788-1789—Summary of Mallet's Political Education by Taine . . . . .	52

## CHAPTER IV.

*MERCURE DE FRANCE, 1789-1792.*

Assembly of States-General—Mallet du Pan Reorganises the <i>Mercur</i> —His Analysis of the Debates—He Champions the Party of Constitutional Reform—Their Failure—Mirabeau—Attacks on Mallet begin after the Days of October—Parties in the Assembly—Maury—Cazalès—Montlosier—Malouet—The <i>Mercur</i> opposes Violence against Persons and Property—He Visits Geneva—Foreign Policy—Judgment on Necker and Mirabeau—Patriotic Deputation to Mallet—His Defence of the Clergy and Continued Attempts to Enlighten the Public as to prevailing Disorder and Anarchy—The Flight to Varennes and Enforced Suspension of <i>Mercur</i> after Domiciliary Visit to Mallet's House—Description of Life in Paris (Note)—Resumption of Editorship—Articles—The Approach of War—Policy of Brissot and the Girondins—The <i>Émigrés</i> —Attitude of Robespierre and of Louis XVI. towards War—The King Advised by Montmorin, Malouet and Mallet du Pan—Mallet's Opinion of the King—Mallet's Determined Opposition to the War—His Prophetic Anticipations—War Declared—Mallet's Position becomes Impossible—Abandons <i>Mercur</i> and is Entrusted with a Mission from Louis XVI. in May 1792 . . . . .	85
--	----

## CHAPTER V.

*FRANKFORT AND BRUSSELS, 1792-1794.*

Mission to Frankfort—The Brunswick Manifesto—Mallet goes to Geneva, then to Lausanne—Visit to Brussels—His Relations with Ministers, Elgin and Mercy-Argenteau—The Archduke Charles—Publishes the <i>Considérations</i> —Its Effect—Coburg Campaign—Criticisms on Conduct of the War—Settles at Berne—Reports to Lord Elgin and British Government describing the Conventional <i>Régime</i> —Account of Robespierre and the Committee—Anecdotes (Note)—Jealousies of the Allied Powers—European Situation at the Close of 1794 . . . . .	146
---	-----



# CONTENTS

xix

## CHAPTER VI.

### THERMIDOR TO VENDÉMIAIRE, 1794-1795.

	PAGE
Begins Regular Political Correspondence for Courts of Vienna, Berlin and Lisbon 1795—Reaction after Thermidor—Jeunesse Dorée—Lethargy of the French—Exhaustion of Allies—Hopes of Peace and of the Termination of the Revolution—Peace of Bâle—Sufferings and Death of the Dauphin—The New King approaches Mallet du Pan through Sainte-Aldegonde—The Declaration of Verona—Louis XVIII. and Charles X.—Quiberon Expedition—The Struggle in France—13th Vendémiaire and Establishment of the Directory—Mallet's Disappointment—Description of Berne and of his Life there—Relations with British Ministers—The Lameth Intrigue and Wickham—Mallet's Friends and Correspondents—Lally-Tollendal—Mounier—Malouet—Montlosier—Sainte-Aldegonde—De Castries—Gallatin—de Pradt, etc. . . . .	185

## CHAPTER VII.

### VIENNA CORRESPONDENCE, 1795-1796.

The Directory Described in Vienna Correspondence—The Directors and the Constitution of 1795—The People—The Government—Finance—Foreign Policy—Conduct of the War—Criticism of Émigrés and Allies—Policy Recommended by Mallet du Pan—The Italian Campaign of 1796—Fresh Pamphlet, ' <i>Correspondance Politique</i> '—Discouragement of the Writer. . . . .	222
--	-----

## CHAPTER VIII.

### FRUCTIDOR, 1797.

Mallet's Son in London— <i>Lettre à un Ministre d'État</i> —Hopes of his Friends of a Settlement of Affairs and their Admiration for Bonaparte—Mallet does not share these Hopes—Pichegru—The Elections in Spring of 1797 bring about a Deadlock which ends with the <i>Coup d'État</i> of 18th Brumaire—Mallet's Comments—Alleged Failure to recognise Bonaparte—His Criticism of Bonaparte in Letters to <i>Quotidienne</i> which lead to his Expulsion from Berne—He searches for a Home elsewhere in Switzerland and finally settles for the Winter at Friburg—The Abbé de Lisle and Portalis—Prisons under the Terror—Conquest of Switzerland and Annexation of Geneva—Mallet excluded by Name from French Citizenship—He Determines to seek Refuge in England and resume Journalism	254
---	-----

## CHAPTER IX.

*MERCURE BRITANNIQUE, 1798-1800.*

	PAGE
Part of England in the War, and State of Public Opinion at the Time of Mallet's Arrival in May 1798—Mallet's Plan to start a French Newspaper in London—Encouraged by Lord Liverpool and Windham but Neglected by Government—The <i>Mercure Britannique</i> Started—Its Character and Temper—Articles on the Destruction of the Swiss Confederation—Success of the Work—Life and Society in London—Relations with the <i>Émigrés</i> —Letter from Monsieur—Attacked by the Ultra-Royalists—He Rebukes them—Reception by Monsieur—The Agony of the Directory—Character of Sieyès—Bonaparte's Return—Mallet's Recognition of the Significance of Bonaparte's <i>Coup d'État</i> , and of the Wisdom of his Domestic Policy—His Health gives way—His Letter to Wickham—His Death and Funeral—Government Recognition for his Family—Character drawn by his Daughter (Note) . . .	284

## CHAPTER X.

CHARACTER AND POSITION.

Vicissitudes of Mallet du Pan's Reputation and their Causes—His Character and the Qualities which fitted him for the Work of a Contemporary Historian—His Independence—His Political Capacity and Clearness of Vision—Testimony of Carlyle, Taine, Gentz, Sainte-Beuve—His Style—The Course of his Opinions during the Revolution—His Analysis of the Jacobin Dogma—His Liberalism—Accusation that He Counsell'd and Fomented the War—His Foresight, and his Championship of Constitutional Monarchy Justified . . .	333
--	-----

## APPENDIX.

Article from the <i>Mercure Britannique</i> on the Influence of the <i>Philosophes</i> on the Revolution . . . . .	357
INDEX . . . . .	363

## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY LIFE IN GENEVA—JOURNALISM—RELATIONS WITH VOLTAIRE.

1749-1780.

THE story of the branch of the Mallet family connected with Mallet du Pan derives some interest and diversity from the religious and political persecutions which drove them successively from France to Geneva and from Geneva and the Continent to England. In Geneva, indeed, they took deep root, but the words in which John Lewis Mallet commented on their expulsion in 1797 from the country which had been their home for close upon two hundred and fifty years are descriptive of much in the family history. "To us," he wrote in natural despondency, "were not given the peaceable habitation and the sure dwelling and the quiet resting-place." Their wanderings, according to a circumstantial but legendary tradition with which they adorned their pedigree, began with the second Crusade and a temporary settlement in Antioch, but their original home was undoubtedly in Normandy, the home of many families of the name, including that of the comrade in arms of William the Conqueror who settled in England. The earliest authentic date of the family with which we are concerned is 1530, when a certain Jean Mallet



married Marguerite de Jeaux; and its first migration occurred in 1558 (the year of Queen Elizabeth's accession), when their son Jacques, a Huguenot cloth merchant of Rouen, left France, then on the verge of the civil war between the two religions which culminated in the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and settled at Geneva, there to enjoy the free exercise of the Protestant faith under the stern ecclesiastical and moral rule of Calvin. In 1566, two years after the death of the great reformer, Jacques Mallet was received in the first rank and company of the freemen of the city, he and his children, '*et les enfans de ses enfans, nés, et à naître, naturels et légitimes, jusqu'à l'infini,*' to live there in the reformed religion. His "Lettre de Bourgeoisie," signed by G. Gallatin, Secretary of State, and dated 24th April 1566, adds the curious provision that, in consideration of the privileges and franchises conferred upon him, he should pay *six écus d'or*, and give to the Republic a '*sceillot de cuir bouilli* (leather bucket), *pour la défense contre le feu.*' He married Laura, daughter of Léonard Sartoris of Quiers in Piedmont who had died in the prisons of the Inquisition and who was the ancestor of a distinguished Genevese family. By her he had ten children, and in the course of the two succeeding centuries 170 persons of the name were born in Geneva, where their prosperity is attested by the erection in the middle of the seventeenth century of one of the handsomest houses in the city, the Maison Mallet in the Cour de St. Pierre. Although, in the words of the Genevese chronicle, '*riche et très bien alliée,*' the family produced only two *conseillers d'État*, but they were represented continuously in the Council of

the Two Hundred<sup>1</sup> and were distinguished by several men of literary eminence. Various members of the family returned at different times to France<sup>2</sup> where their descendants now form its most numerous and prosperous branch, but the English branch alone is descended from Mallet du Pan, the subject of the present memoir, who was himself seventh in direct descent

<sup>1</sup>The *Petit Conseil*, the executive power, was composed of twenty-five magistrates styled *nobles et très honorés seigneurs*. From it were chosen the four syndics of the Republic, including the First Syndic, president of the council. The *Conseil des Deux Cents* was the legislature, and its members were called *magnifiques seigneurs*. The title magnificent applied to both councils, but was more commonly used of the *Petit Conseil*. Both councils were recruited by co-optation from among *citoyens* and *bourgeois*. The chief function of the *Conseil Général*, the electoral body composed of all *citoyens* and *bourgeois* over twenty-one who paid taxes, was to choose the syndics from a list of eight names presented to them by the two higher councils.

<sup>2</sup>Jacques Mallet and Laura Sartoris had a son Jacques (2) who married in 1600 Louise Varro, and had a son Jacques (3) who married in 1634 Jeanne Thabuis. Their son Étienne, married to Hélène Rilliet, was father of Jacques (4) (1680-1767), who married Isabeau Rigaud, and was father of Étienne above described, the father of Mallet du Pan.

Three branches of this family are re-established in France, descending respectively from Gabriel (1572-1651), elder brother to Jacques (2), and from two younger brothers of Jacques (3), Louis and Joseph. From Gabriel comes the great family of Protestant bankers in Paris, which had twenty-four living males a few years ago, and the head of which is Alphonse Baron Mallet de Chalmassy, Régent of the Bank of France. Among Joseph's descendants were General François de Mallet (1765-1839), created Baron by Louis XVIII. in 1816, who left issue by his marriage with Anne daughter of the fifth Viscount Molesworth, and General Paul Henri Mallet Prevost, who settling in the United States in 1794 became the creator of Frenchtown and founder of an American branch.

from the Huguenot refugee. His father and mother are thus described by their grandson :—<sup>1</sup>

“My grandfather, Étienne Mallet, was brought up to the Church, and I have always heard him mentioned as a man of good understanding, mild, agreeable manner, and some talents as a preacher. He was exemplary in his pastoral and social duties, and for some years of his life, and I believe at the time of his death, was minister at Céligny, where he was remembered, even in my time, with feelings of affectionate respect. The aristocracy of Geneva was not then exempt from the overbearing disposition natural to the aristocracy of every country ; and some of them, who had country seats at Céligny, were not popular with the peasantry. My grandfather, on the contrary, was uniformly affable and kind to all ; and was sometimes taken to task by his neighbours for his condescension and popular manners.

“He married Mdle du Pan, of one of the oldest magisterial families.<sup>2</sup> My great grandfather Du Pan was First Syndic of the Republic, and I have often heard an anecdote of him which is characteristic of the simplicity of manners of that time. A French envoy, who had been lately appointed, on coming to pay his first visit of ceremony to the syndic, found him just returned from the council, and seated by his kitchen fire, in his wig and sword, eating *briselets* (a sort of crisp cake), hot and hot, as fast as they could be made ; and as the chimney-mantel admitted of several persons being seated under it, the old gentleman invited the minister to take a chair and partake of his collation.

“My grandmother had been handsome ; even in

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences* by J. L. Mallet.

<sup>2</sup> The first Du Pan known was Etienne Du Pan, a landowner at Vigon in Piedmont. His great-grandson, Lucain, was received as Bourgeois de Genève in 1488.



her advanced age she had great remains of beauty, a good person, regular and delicate features and complexion, her manners were gentle and graceful, but the high spirit broke forth when roused by anything unbecoming. She was a strictly religious person, and had no indulgence for the loose opinions and manners that began to prevail in her time. My grandfather's circumstances were narrow, and as his father, who lived to the age of eighty-seven, survived him six years, his chief dependence was on his living of Céligny and his wife's fortune, which was small. His income could not have exceeded £300 a year."

The son of the couple thus described, Jacques, afterwards known as Mallet du Pan,<sup>1</sup> was born on the 5th of November 1749 at Céligny, a village between Coppet and Nyon situated on rising ground which commands fine views of the Alps and the lake, and it was there that he spent his early years until his father's death which occurred when he was twelve years old. He was brought up at the famous College of Geneva founded by Calvin, to whose system of education Geneva owed so much of its prosperity, and at fifteen he was removed to the Auditoire or University Class where he studied philosophy and law. He seems to have won distinction in his classes, but no formal education can fully explain the growth of character, and Mallet du Pan undoubtedly owed both his qualities of mind and his preparation for

<sup>1</sup> Persons of the same family at Geneva are distinguished not by their Christian names but by the family name of their wives when married and of their mothers when single. Étienne Mallet therefore and his son before his marriage were both Mallet du Pan, and the latter, having become known as a writer before his marriage, retained the name of Mallet du Pan throughout his life, instead of going by the name of Mallet Vallier (his wife's name) as he would have done had he settled and lived at Geneva in the ordinary course.

his future career to his citizenship of Geneva, which from the middle of the eighteenth century was perhaps the most stimulating intellectual centre to be found in Europe.

Few things in history are more striking than the contrast between the pettiness in territory and population of the frontier Republic, and the greatness of the part she was destined to play ; between her outward insignificance, and the singular and successful energy of her sons. Before the Reformation she had wrested her independence from the Dukes of Savoy, independence which she maintained only by the strength of her walls and the vigilance of her citizens. To the resolution and pertinacity which the Genevese acquired in these struggles, the Reformation added stern religious belief and moral discipline, and the economic necessities of a State without natural resources called forth the exercise of intelligence, power of work, and attention to detail ; and encouraged positive and practical views of life at the expense of the faculties of humour and imagination. Such were the qualities which built up the Protestant Rome, the city of refuge into which flowed a stream of immigration from France, and they remained characteristic of the people through the changes brought by the eighteenth century. As persecution ceased a return flow of emigration began, active-minded Genevese sought fortune in France and other countries, and there was set up an exchange of ideas which, combined with the natural position of Geneva at a point of junction between North and South, transformed the puritan stronghold during the eighteenth century into an enlightened cosmopolitan centre. The kind of influence which Geneva exercised on European thought is shown by the fact that she repaid with Rousseau the debt she had incurred from

France in Calvin, that it was to Geneva that Montesquieu was obliged to resort to publish the *Esprit des Lois*, that De Saussure, Delolme, and many eminent names in literature, history, politics and science adorned her annals, that she received in her neighbourhood the author of the *Decline and Fall*. But what gave the greatest celebrity to Geneva and her lake as a place of pilgrimage for all that was distinguished in Europe was the settlement there of the literary idol of the century, Voltaire. The story of his relations with the Republic is not the least significant, it is certainly the most entertaining, chapter in the annals of Geneva, '*cité sournoise où jamais l'on ne rit*' as he described it. The Government were from the first divided between pride at receiving Voltaire and alarm at the pernicious influence of his opinions ; for he arrived at the moment when the conflict between the old and the new ideas was already causing dissension in the little State. The theological tyranny of Calvin's formidable consistory harmonised ill with the spirit of which Voltaire was the incarnation, but it was not on this point that his struggle with Genevese puritanism began. Inhabitants of the city who returned from Paris, enriched by operations of commerce and banking, which had now become important sources of wealth in Geneva itself, were impatient of the restraints of sumptuary laws of almost unexampled rigour ; men who had set out with their wives in *chaises de poste* brought them back covered with jewels and decked in the latest Parisian fashion, in brilliant equipages, followed by grooms and riding horses, and with a taste for frivolous amusements which the literary and scientific distractions of their native town were not sufficient to gratify. They returned to a town whose laws enjoined the wearing of serge and black



cloth, punished with imprisonment tailors or hat makers who should introduce any new fashions without the express permission of the council, looked upon dancing with horror as having caused the death of St. John the Baptist, and had with great difficulty succeeded in repressing the national taste of the people for theatrical representations of all kinds. The mass of the bourgeois and the people were still devoted to the Calvinist *régime*, but Voltaire's arrival was sure to give an immense stimulus to the desire for change in the upper classes, and Voltaire's gaiety and social charm soon attracted many of them, including even *pasteurs* and sons of the magistrates, to his hospitable domain at Les Délices. Voltaire's passion was the theatre, then at the height of its vogue in France where private theatricals were the main diversion of society, and all his difficulties with the Genevese Government, who were backed by Rousseau and the poorer classes, arose from his ceaseless efforts to set up a stage in his own house and even to establish theatrical representations in Geneva itself. The jealous alarm of the elders of the city at the success of his efforts to seduce the patrician class from the path of virtue, combined with the scandal of the unauthorised publication of *La Pucelle*, drove him from his first home within the territory of the Republic to Lausanne, and finally caused him to settle at Ferney, situated in a French *enclave* between Geneva and the Bernese Pays de Vaud, where he was safe from their interference. Once established there he gave full rein to his tastes, and the best of Genevese society was delighted by and participated in the performance of a long series of his tragedies, and enjoyed intercourse with the literary and fashionable celebrities of France and other countries. The disputes

caused by the malicious wit of the old philosopher and the austere fanaticism of the rulers of Geneva, which divided Genevese society and did much to undermine the moral and religious tradition of the '*petitissime, parvulissime et pédantissime*' Republic, culminated in the burning of *Candide* by the public executioner of Geneva, and Voltaire thereupon proceeded in characteristic fashion to revenge himself by sowing broadcast in the city the blasphemous libels against Christianity which disgraced his later years.

When Mallet du Pan appeared upon the scene (literally as well as figuratively, for we hear of him as a youthful actor at Ferney) these disturbances were matters of ancient history. Just as happened in the case of the revolution in France, political agitation had followed upon social and literary upheaval, agitation which threatened the very existence of the State. In Geneva in her decadence, no less than in France, there was plenty of material for political discontent. The constitutional struggles of Geneva derive their main interest from the curious manner in which they prefigure the great convulsion in France, and from the connection with the miniature State of the two great names of Voltaire and Rousseau; of men like Necker, the Finance Minister of the Monarchy, and his still more famous daughter, Madame de Staël; of Clavière, the Finance Minister of the Convention; of Sir Francis d'Ivernois, the pamphleteer patronised by Pitt; of Dumont, the assistant and biographer of Mirabeau and the interpreter of Bentham, and of Mallet du Pan himself. But they have an interest of their own, not only as the story of the inevitable end of one of those city-states which have done so much for civilisation,

but also as being full of lessons for political students. Owing to the growth of a class outside the original constitution of the Republic it had gradually been transformed into an aristocratic oligarchy. The population of Geneva was divided into three political classes: (1) the citizens or burghers who enjoyed political rights and were both electors and alone eligible for public employments; (2) the *natifs*, or sons of inhabitants who had not been admitted to the freedom of the city, who continued generation after generation to be deprived of all political privileges, and who were even debarred from the exercise of certain higher branches of trade and from holding commissions in the town militia; and (3) "inhabitants" or strangers settled at Geneva. The *natifs* became in the course of time by far the most numerous class, and, as they increased in number and intelligence, they grew more and more impatient of their position. Their exasperation led them at last to open acts of hostility which ended in the banishment of some of the most distinguished of their number. The first of these disturbances occurred in the years 1768, 1769 and 1770, just when Mallet du Pan was growing into manhood. A Genevese, it has been said, imbibes the love of politics with his mother's milk, and a youth of Mallet's ardent turn of mind was not likely to remain long indifferent to the conflict of opinions about him. At the age of twenty, then, he sowed his wild oats as a democratic agitator by writing a pamphlet<sup>1</sup> which became the gospel of the *natifs*, and was publicly burnt before the Hôtel de Ville as a "seditious libel, an assault on

<sup>1</sup> *Compte rendu de la défense des citoyens bourgeois de Genève, 1771* (160 pages).



the State, the councils, the citizens and the burgesses". As his son observes :—<sup>1</sup>

" My father's family and connections were all on the aristocratic side, some of his nearest relatives being members of the Government; but the same generous feeling, although in a different direction, which many years afterwards enlisted his talents on the side of an oppressed minority in France, induced him in the year 1770, when hardly of age, to embrace the popular side at Geneva. It required no little strength of character and political courage, situated as he was, to quit his natural ranks, and, disregarding the prejudices and pride of opinion of his family and friends, to advocate those higher principles of freedom now generally acknowledged, but which were at variance with the policy and practice both of ancient and modern Republics."

This exploit of Mallet du Pan was not so inconsistent with his later opinions as a superficial view would suggest. It shows him at all events a typical product of his country at a time when, as we have seen, new wine was being poured so rapidly into old bottles. In his moral outlook with its passionate and courageous earnestness, and in the positive and practical character of his intellect, he was a Genevese of the old school; in his love of freedom and justice, in his popular sympathies, and in his willingness to examine new ideas on their merits, he was a child of his age. It would not have been difficult to predict what his final attitude would be towards the political philosophy which pretended to regenerate mankind by building afresh on the ruins of existing religious and political systems, but he was still to feel his way, and form his opinions in his own characteristic fashion by actual observation. From

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*

this point of view his introduction to Voltaire and his circle was an event of capital importance to the young student of politics. Struck by his independence and probably not displeased at seeing his old enemies of the council attacked by one of their own class, Voltaire sought his acquaintance and asked him to Ferney, where he was a frequent guest until the philosopher's death eight years later, in 1778. To his patronage Mallet du Pan owed his recommendation in 1772 for the post of Professor of History and Literature to the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel. Mallet du Pan accepted the offer and proceeded to Cassel where he delivered an inaugural address,<sup>1</sup> but the serious and independent young Genevese was hardly the man to suit a German prince whose flirtation with French philosophy did not prevent him from selling, a little later, battalions of his subjects, at so much a head, to the British Government for the purpose of putting down the rising freedom of the United States. He accordingly remained but a short time at Cassel from whence he returned in the following year to Geneva. His son hints that there were other reasons for his return. A college friendship at this time took him frequently to Aubonne, a beautifully situated town in the Pays de Vaud, where he met the young lady who was to become his wife, Mdlle Vallier of that place. He was often accompanied to Aubonne by some of his Geneva friends, particularly by a certain Italian count whose pursuits assimilated to his own.

"These young men were great lions, for they frequented Voltaire's house ; they had seen some of his

<sup>1</sup> Entitled *Quelle est l'influence de la philosophie sur les belles lettres*, on the 8th April, 1772, Cassel.

tragedies acted there, and were full of the library novelties of the time. . . . The Bailli, or governor of the district, happened to be a man of education, whose wife took pains to make his house agreeable to his friends, and occasionally got up a French play for the young people; my father and mother acted together in the *Gageure Imprévue* of Sedaine, my mother undertaking the part of the Marquise de Clairville. Our Genevese relations, who never liked the marriage, even now seemed to consider these theatricals as the trap which caught my father's heart; and my uncle Mallet in a late letter, giving me some account of the early occurrences of my father's life, dwells on this circumstance, as if a young man of twenty-five, falling in love with a young girl of eighteen was quite a novelty in the world. Such things did happen, however, even in the good old times. It was natural that my father's family should wish him to marry at Geneva, where his talents and connections might have procured him an advantageous match, but their interference was too pertinacious. My father was not only gifted with great independence of character, no great help towards making a provision for his family, but with a just confidence in his powers of useful exertion; so that when his mother and uncles found him deaf to their collected wisdom, they had the good sense to make the best of a bad case. My mother was of a respectable family: her manners were extremely pleasing; and having been brought up with great simplicity of tastes and habits, she became a great favourite with my father's family and friends: still it was necessary to live, and my father, when married, looked about him for some literary employment." <sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile he settled in Geneva, and devoted himself to his favourite studies, particularly to historical reading the fruits of which had a lasting effect on his

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*



opinions and showed itself in all his subsequent writings. For the moment indeed it led him into an exaggerated distrust of systems. "We must return," he exclaimed, "to experimentalism in politics, the task of which should be to remove the unequal burden cast upon the people by the existence of privileged classes, and to establish civil if not social equality." In this attitude of generous revolt the young writer fell under the attraction of the too famous Linguet, who in his *Théorie des Lois Civiles*, an eloquent and original satire upon the civil organisation of France under the paradoxical form of a panegyric of despotism as the only hope for the people, had attacked the economists and the encyclopædists, rehabilitated slavery, and exalted the East at the expense of the West.

It was to champion this *frondeur* and controvert the reasonings of his assailants drawn from Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois*, which he then styled a "*plaidoyer pour l'aristocratie*" but which experience and observation of republican governments very soon caused him to regard as a mine of political wisdom,<sup>1</sup> that Mallet du Pan published in 1775, at the age of twenty-five, a curious essay called *Doutes sur l'éloquence*. The only interest of the book, which was an attack on the political and economic *régimes* of Northern Europe as a usurpation maintained against the interests of the majority, is autobiographical. Crude and doctrinaire as it is, it shows how near to his heart were the principles of humanity and justice, his attachment to which survived the excesses of the Revolution. If Mallet du Pan was to prove the strongest adherent of the Monarchy against its enemies, it was not because, as has been said, he was

<sup>1</sup> Sayous, i., 114.

'*sans entrailles pour les peuples*'. The essay had one important result for the author, it brought him into personal relations with Linguet and thus initiated him into the career of journalism.

Linguet, now completely forgotten, but in his day one of the most prominent figures in France, was a man born to be his own worst enemy. He was a person of brilliant and versatile ability, but of vanity, jealousy and self-confidence even more remarkable than his ability. '*Opiniâtre, inflammable, inflexible*,' as he described himself, he was the Ishmael of letters, and his career which all France followed with interest for twenty years led him, after interminable persecution at the hands of the agents and ministers of absolute monarchy, to death on the guillotine for his flattery of despots. Literature had been his earliest pursuit, but as money was a necessity and "it was better to be a wealthy cook than an unknown savant" he went to the bar where two *causes célèbres*, his successful defence of the Duc d'Aiguillon and the Comte de Merangiés, immediately gave him a great reputation. He then proceeded to make his position impossible by insolent attacks on his colleagues and the magistrates for which he was disbarred, and turning again to literature he accepted from the publisher Pancoucke the editorship of one of his new enterprises, the *Journal de Bruxelles*, and so became the founder of modern journalism. But he did not long maintain the decent level of literary and political criticism he had proposed for himself. Giving full rein to the caustic bitterness of his disposition he tilted against all the powers, ministerial and philosophic, in France, and in 1776 crowned his offences by an article on the reception of La Harpe at the Academy, in which he inveighed

against the new member as a '*petit homme, orgueilleux, insolent et bas*,' and against the august body which had previously repulsed his own attempt to enter it. The outraged academicians appealed successfully to the Government, and the Garde des Sceaux Miromesnil ordered Pancoucke to expel him from the editorship, which he did, adding insult to injury by giving the post to La Harpe. The "modern Aretino," the panegyrist of Asiatic despotism, then retired, not, as Grimm satirically observed, to Ispahan, but to London, and there founded his famous *Annales*, '*mélange de raison, de délire, de grossièreté et de talent*,' which with many interruptions he carried on till the Revolution. But he did not long remain in London, where he gave offence by his attacks on British institutions and British morals, and retired to Brussels. In France he was again denounced before the *Parlement* and in spite of powerful protectors, for the king and queen seemed to have thoroughly enjoyed his audacious sallies against the literary and philosophic *coteries* of Paris, he was at last attracted or enticed to the capital, where in 1780 he was clapped into the Bastille. Emerging two years later he continued his stormy journalistic career, varied by an excursion to Vienna, where Joseph II. whom he had flattered at first ennobled and pensioned him, and then dismissed him for a defence of the insurgents of Brabant.

It was during his wanderings abroad after his adventure with La Harpe that this political swashbuckler made his appearance at Ferney, where Voltaire, who in spite of his differences with the encyclopædist philosophers was always careful to remain on good terms with them, positively shuddered under the infliction of his



presence, and oddly and savagely described him as '*le premier écrivain des charniers* (charnel-house writer) *sans contestation*'. But Mallet du Pan, whose admiration for his independence and originality appears not to have been dispelled by closer acquaintance, decided to collaborate with him in the new journalistic venture which Linguet intended to establish in England. In 1777 accordingly Mallet journeyed to London, and thence to Brussels, where Linguet finally arranged for the publication of his *Annales politiques, civiles et littéraires du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*.

Of this journey to England which procured him acquaintances and confirmed his English prepossessions no record remains. But the *Annales* was founded, and Mallet conducted the Swiss edition and contributed much valuable matter, especially on economic subjects which he treated with refreshing solidity and common sense<sup>1</sup> and in a spirit severely critical towards the sect of the economists, with their *logogriphe*s, their *impôt unique* and their leanings to legal despotism. It is curious in this connection to notice with how little enthusiasm he writes of Turgot, who had been called upon to reform the financial administration of France in their sense, compared with his eulogies of Necker's economic work. It is difficult to imagine that two men of such fundamentally different dispositions as Linguet and Mallet could long have co-operated. Linguet's incarceration in the Bastille at all events brought the partnership to an end, and Mallet du Pan decided to

<sup>1</sup> His comments on the studied mystery with which its votaries had surrounded financial questions, his doubts as to the necessity of any such obscurity and his own lucid expositions of principles are characteristic of this spirit.

continue the publication on his own account till Linguet should reappear. This he did at Lausanne for over two years from the close of the year 1780, continuing of course to live in Geneva until his migration to Paris in the autumn of 1783.

It was no low ideal which the young editor, who had now at thirty attained an independent position, set before himself in his self-chosen career of journalism, a career which was to cover twenty of the most eventful years of modern European history. He set out with a large dose of contempt for the "bastard species of literary men called journalists and critics who swarmed in the great capitals," a contempt which grew with his later experience in Paris, until writing and authorship themselves became distasteful to him. He wrote from the beginning with a sense of responsibility<sup>1</sup> which is the characteristic of men of action rather than of men of letters. Impartiality, frankness, love of liberty were inborn in him, but first among the requisites for commenting on ideas and events he always placed assured and scrupulously verified information and disinterested search for truth. If it was beyond his power always to circumstantiate recent facts, he waged ceaseless war against the printed lies and puerile inventions which formed the staple of the public news of that day, and were accepted, as he said, with incorrigible ineptitude and credulity by the public. But he was far from confining himself to the chronicler's task, the *triste métier*, as he somewhere calls it, of an annalist. Writing at a time when "readers were so satiated with tedious political intrigue and still more tedious warfare that they had lost the power of following great events, and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Note on p. 105.

took as much interest in a duel between ships of war as they had formerly shown in the ruin of a kingdom ; when curiosity fed on scandalous anecdote and the miracles of a Mesmer or a Cagliostro," he prided himself on investigating and bringing to notice every important European event and endeavouring to give a faithful picture of its causes. Contemporary historian was the designation he chose for himself, he often deplored the necessity which compelled him to be an observer of his times rather than the historian, and he constantly strove to combine the functions of both in his journalistic work.<sup>1</sup>

The impression conveyed by the tone of his comments is curiously modern. There are observations on the tremendous rivalry in armaments and on the universal militarism of the time, on the growth of plutocracy, on the character and true use of naval power, which might have been written to-day. Mallet du Pan was perhaps at his best in his rapid but masterly sketches of the career of a Pombal or a

<sup>1</sup> The following note from the *Reminiscences* shows how early he began the practice of carefully organising his sources of information which gave such value to his work in the Revolutionary epoch.

"On the death of Sir Samuel Romilly, his executor (my friend Mr. Wishaw) gave me a letter from his sister, Mme Roget, who married a Genevese, dated Geneva the 31st May 1781, proposing to her brother to supply my father once a week with such public intelligence and observations as might be useful to him in the publication of his work. 'Mr. Mallet,' she says, 'is a Republican ; he is partial to our country, he loves the truth, and is a determined assertor of it.' Romilly probably declined the proposal ; but he and my father were afterwards brought together at Paris, and renewed their acquaintance at a later period in London, where he experienced many attentions from Sir Samuel. He was extremely kind to me to the last, and asked me occasionally to his house, where I have met some of the most distinguished persons of our time."



Rodney, or in historical summaries such as those in which he recounted the hypocritical treatment of the Jewish race by Europe; when he described the principles which had prevailed in the matter of religious toleration, and when he distinguished between the impolicy of the Edict of Nantes which marked the final estrangement of the two religions and the ruin of the weaker, and the statesmanship of the Edict of Joseph II., which recognised and safeguarded liberty of conscience while preserving the necessary pre-eminence of the national religion.

In the course of some critical remarks on Voltaire's historical writings<sup>1</sup> he has given his idea of the qualifications which distinguish the historian from the chronicler and romance writer: "Among his indispensable requirements is the power of criticising his authorities and weighing the character, views, position and trustworthiness of previous writers, of labouring to reconcile them and to verify conjectures, dates and documents, of distinguishing between truth and probability, of confronting imposture with reason and fact".

Voltaire as an historian hardly came up to such a standard as this. His critic does full justice to his brilliant clearness of style, to the art with which he compared or contrasted facts, to his penetrating *coup d'œil*, to his unapproached faculty for marshalling events in an orderly and interesting manner; qualities which led Lord Chesterfield to say of the *Siècle de Louis XIV* that while Bolingbroke had taught him how to read history, Voltaire had taught him how to write it.

<sup>1</sup> In an article entitled *De la Manière d'écrire l'histoire*, in which he discusses some ancient and modern historical works including those of Hume, Robertson, Gibbon and Voltaire.

But Mallet signalled as a dangerous example to historians Voltaire's contempt for accurate knowledge, his method of substituting for it philosophic opinions, and his sceptical reasoning which dispensed with learning and refuted research by epigram. He had, wrote Mallet du Pan, confined his criticisms to the discussion of superstitious fables, and his doubts and researches to the region of religious credulity. He had given but little study to laws, morality and public right, or to the political causes of the development, the fall, or the preservation of empires. He was dazzled and subjugated by love of the arts and of magnificence in sovereigns or princely protectors of painters and poets. Finally for the solution of historical problems he too often fell back on the dogma of fatality, '*Dogme cruel fait pour encourager le crime, pour ôter à la vertu toute son énergie, et dont un historien sage devrait cacher les preuves*'.

It was not as historian only that Mallet du Pan had occasion at this time and in later years to criticise Voltaire's ideas and defend his memory. He did both in language which shows how little permanent influence his intercourse with Voltaire had on his own modes of thought.<sup>1</sup> He must have felt towards him the loyal attachment so easily inspired in his juniors by an old man of great distinction who honours them by his attention: he admired him as a man of letters, the greatest the modern world has yet seen, he could sympathise with the genuine hatred of intolerance and oppression which was the only definitely liberal sentiment in Voltaire's political creed; and there can be no doubt that

<sup>1</sup> "Jamais," remarks the historian Müller, "on n'est parvenu à faire changer à un genevois sa manière de voir."

association with the literary dictator of Europe and his friends gave him the confidence and the assurance which enabled him so early to hold his own in the literary world. From being provincial he became cosmopolitan. But of conformity with Voltaire's opinions in philosophy or politics it would be difficult to find a trace. There is far more protest than agreement even in an article in which he warmly defends his dead patron against the denunciations of an anonymous correspondent. The indignant writer had attacked Voltaire's works as a '*collection d'infamies et d'ordures*,' and in particular accused him of having severed all the ties which bind mankind to a Divinity. No one man more sincerely deplored the unworthy productions of his decrepitude or the monotonously indecent pleasantry with which he treated the most serious subjects ; his outrages on revelation and the manner in which he invariably confused the absurdities of theology with the truths of Christianity ; and the terrible influence of his diatribes on public opinion.<sup>1</sup> All the more notable therefore was Mallet's declaration that during the eight consecutive years of his acquaintance with Voltaire, at a time when

<sup>1</sup> Sainte-Beuve speaking of Mallet du Pan's religious opinions describes him as "un protestant, je dirais même un déiste". I may therefore quote a confession of faith, sufficiently remarkable in a man of letters of the eighteenth century, which he printed in reply to a correspondent who professed ignorance of his "principles" and more than hinted that he sympathised with those of Voltaire : "Mes principes sont ceux d'un citoyen de Genève élevé dans la religion Calviniste, celle de ses pères et de son souverain, ayant appris par l'excellente éducation qu'on reçoit dans sa patrie, et par l'exemple du clergé le plus vertueux et le plus éclairé, à adorer la main Divine dans ses ouvrages et dans le bienfait de la Révélation, à être religieux sans superstition, et tolérant sans impiété" (*Annales*, ii., 444).



he was flooding Europe with his '*indécennes goguenarderies*,' he had never surprised him in a single doubt as to the existence of God or in a jest on this subject. The author of the line, '*Si Dieu n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer*,' never, he asserted, abnegated in private this doctrine of his works. In health or sickness, gay or serious, with Christians, atheists, theists, he always professed his respect for "natural religion".

"I saw him," writes Mallet, "one evening at supper give a tremendous lesson to d'Alembert and Condorcet by sending his servants out of the room in the middle of the meal, and saying to the two academicians, 'Now, gentlemen, you are at liberty to pursue your discussion. As I do not wish to be robbed and murdered to-night by my servants I am anxious that all notions of God and of a future state should not be eradicated from their minds.'"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. L. Mallet's *Reminiscences*, or as Mallet du Pan repeats it: "Maintenant, Messieurs, continuez vos propos contre Dieu. Mais comme je ne veux pas être égorgé et volé cette nuit par mes domestiques il est bon qu'ils ne vous écoutent pas" (*Merc. Brit.*, ii., 349). In his account of Voltaire (*Mercure Britannique*, 1798), he brings out even more clearly Voltaire's attitude towards religion and the fundamental difference between it and that of the other anti-religious schools of Paris. "De la terre étrangère où il s'était réfugié le Poète déclara la guerre à la religion. Cette entreprise devient pour lui un amusement, une vengeance, bientôt un besoin et une passion. Tous les six mois il enfantait une diatribe. Lorsqu'il eut épuisé ses apostrophes à l'Église Romaine et ses reproches au sacerdoce, il attaqua le Christianisme: toutes les communions essayèrent ses outrages, et il se proclama le chef d'un Théisme dans les bases duquel il a souvent vacillé. Son scepticisme néanmoins conserva quelque mesure: il jugeait impolitique et dangereux de prêcher publiquement l'athéisme, la matérialité de l'âme, et le néant après la mort. 'Je veux,' écrivait-il à un athée de Paris, 'que les Princes et les Ministres reconnaissent un Dieu, et même un Dieu qui punisse et qui pardonne. Sans ce frein je les regarderais comme des animaux féroces,' etc.

"Three months," he wrote,<sup>1</sup> "after the publication of D'Holbach's *Système de la Nature*, Voltaire received an enthusiastic letter, which I saw, from the heir presumptive to a German State. This prince made no secret of the disastrous impression the work had made on his mind, and appeared an ardent proselyte of its doctrines. Voltaire in his reply confuted his doubts, concluding, 'In a word, Prince, this book appears to me pernicious both to peoples and to kings.—Il n'y a qu'une fureur détestable qui puisse attaquer cette religion sainte : adorez Dieu et soyez juste.'"<sup>2</sup>

If Mallet du Pan's principles kept him from becoming a convert to the ideas of the encyclopædist sect to which Voltaire may have hoped to attach him, his political ideas were no less at variance with the prejudices which did duty for statesmanship in Voltaire. He gave a striking account, in an article on the influence of the philosophers on the French Revolution published in the *Mercure Britannique* many years later, of Voltaire's belief in monarchy, his indifference to the rights of the people, his aversion to political speculation and republican forms of government. His

<sup>1</sup> *Annales*, i., 303.

<sup>2</sup> Here is another anecdote from the *Reminiscences* : "My father having gone one morning to Ferney to breakfast, and being in Voltaire's bedroom, M. Fabri du Gex came in with an artist of his acquaintance, whom he wished to introduce to Voltaire. The artist was attended by a dog that followed him into the room ; and who, brushing by the chimney, knocked down the tongs and shovel, to the great annoyance of Voltaire, who, violently pulling the bell, said to the footman who came in, 'Lavigne, send up one of my carriage horses to keep company with this gentleman's dog'. Voltaire used to say that it was a very agreeable circumstance to live under a government of which the sovereigns requested you to send your carriage for them when you asked them to dinner."

knowledge of political subjects was slight, and he had given but little thought to them, as his criticism of Montesquieu showed. He lived, observes Mallet du Pan, for fifteen consecutive years at the gates of a city in which questions of republican government were the constant subject of debate, without ever understanding the elements of them. He loved neither republican nor despotic states, but he detested the common people and dreaded their influence, though he would not systematically have oppressed them. How little he thought the French fit for political liberty may be judged from his remark : '*Nous sommes une nation d'enfants mutins à qui il faut donner des fouets et des sucreries.*' All his inclinations and prejudices were monarchical, his sincere enthusiasm for Louis XIV. proved it ; and his aim was always to conciliate authority and enlist the ruling classes on his side in his attacks on Christianity. "In politics he was but a flatterer." With such opinions it would have been absurd to attribute to Voltaire any design to subvert by violent means the political institutions and the form of society in France, and Mallet du Pan acquits him of such an intention. "Persons like myself," he wrote, "who frequented his house, can bear witness that no word ever escaped him which revealed the faintest desire to see the form of government in his own country changed." Voltaire indeed never dreamt of such an event as the Revolution ; and his disregard of civil freedom, his love of authority, privilege and rank, his timidity of character and fastidiousness, were all aristocratic. As Mallet observed :—

"The first *château* in flames and Voltaire would have abandoned his own and taken refuge abroad ; the



first head on a pike, and he would have thought himself in the days of the League and died of fright. The destruction of the Church and of religion itself would not have mitigated his terror, for much as he hated priests and the mass, he hated even more assassins, plunderers and incendiaries."

The personal connection between the two men has made it necessary to dwell at some length on the attitude of Mallet du Pan towards Voltaire. His opinion of the latter's nominal followers, of the encyclopædists, of Diderot and d'Alembert, as well as of Condorcet and all the *Illuminés fanatiques* whose works became the manual of Jacobinism, belongs to the revolutionary period, when he expressed it with biting directness on many occasions. As he wrote later :—

"Du Clergé, de la Cour, de la Noblesse, de la Finance, du Barreau, des Régiments, des Lycées, on vit éclore un essaim de Platons populaciers et blasphémateurs, dont la sottise et l'insolence eussent fait rougir de honte leurs premiers instituteurs, dont les excès eussent fait regretter la vie à Rousseau et à Voltaire".

We know that in his earlier years in Paris he held very much aloof from them. Philosophers with so slight a hold on the realities of life and government had no attraction for one, the practical and historical bent of whose genius was leading him more and more to distrust abstractions and to follow experience in his political and constitutional speculations. He ranged himself definitely in these years of preparation under the banner of Montesquieu the founder of the new science of history, and in this fact we have the sufficient explanation of his attitude towards the Revolution. For Montesquieu is the anti-

thesis of Rousseau, and Rousseau was the prophet of the new era. The reign of Rousseau over public opinion only began when Voltaire's ended, after the death of the two rivals in 1778. His famous theory of politics, drawn from the anarchical hypotheses of long-forgotten authors and clothed with his peculiar sentiment and incomparable eloquence, dominated from first to last the leaders of the Revolution and furnished the catch-words of the people. '*Sans Jean Jacques Rousseau il n'y aurait pas eu de Révolution,*' said Napoleon, and he added, according to Mme de Staël, '*Je ne le regrette pas, car j'y ai rattrapé le trône !*' Mallet du Pan, who saw so much of "M. de Voltaire," never personally knew "Jean Jacques," but he divined from the first the ascendancy of his teachings and was to learn by bitter experience the hopelessness of combating them.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I have printed as an appendix a portion of a remarkable article written by Mallet du Pan at the end of his life (*Mercure Britannique* 10th March 1799), on the influence exercised by French philosophers on the Revolution. It deals specially with the position of Voltaire and Rousseau.

## CHAPTER II.

THE *ANNALES* AND THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE  
1780-1782.

MALLET'S comments in the *Annales* on the War of Independence and on party government in England will serve to show that he brought to the consideration of great political affairs principles imbibed in a very different atmosphere from that of Paris, and the qualities not too commonly combined of sound judgment and moral enthusiasm. In all he wrote for the information of his contemporaries Mallet du Pan endeavoured to record materials for history. Fact and comment alike are now as hopelessly buried in the original newspaper sheets as if they had been recorded in Chinese; but a biographer can hardly pass over in silence judgments on passing events which reveal already in the writer the prescience and clear-sightedness extolled by Sainte-Beuve, the political capacity signalised by Taine. They reached a level of thought and expression which it would be hard to parallel in the periodical literature of the succeeding century, and which entitles him to the position accorded to him by the learned historian<sup>1</sup> of the French press as the first of the race of true

<sup>1</sup> Eugène Hatin, *Histoire de la Presse en France*, vol. iii., p. 377, "Mallet s'y révèle comme un publiciste distingué : nous pourrions dire que c'est le premier journaliste que nous ayons encore rencontré".



journalists, a position which he was soon to maintain in the capital of France.

The time at which Mallet du Pan succeeded to the sole direction of Linguet's *Annales Politiques*, the beginning of the year 1781, marked the lowest point of disaster and danger to which England had fallen since the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 had first given her a position of supremacy in Europe. Without an ally in the world, she was in arms against France, Spain and the American Colonies, she had just added Holland to the list of her enemies, and the armed neutrality of the North had been formed to assert the rights of neutrals against British sea power. In India Hyder Ali had descended on the Carnatic and was threatening Madras; Ireland was on the very verge of practical independence, and the Gordon riots had for some days placed London at the mercy of the mob. Worse than all, the Government was in the hands of men discredited by failures and distrusted in the country, and the spirit of faction was carried to a point which alarmed and disgusted the friends of England.<sup>1</sup> The coming months were to witness the second surrender (October 1781) of a British army in America, that of Cornwallis with 6,000 men at Yorktown, an event which brought the war in that continent to a standstill, and by sealing the fate of Lord North's Ministry produced the kaleidoscopic changes of the Rockingham, Shelburne and Coalition Ministries, ending in the succession to power in 1783 of the younger Pitt. Early in 1782 followed the

<sup>1</sup> "Vous allez," wrote Voltaire to Mallet in his journey to England in 1777, "dans un pays devenu presque barbare par la violence des factions."

capture by the French fleet of all the rich English islands in the West Indies except Jamaica, Barbados and Antigua, and the recapture by Spain of Minorca, disasters which Rodney's great victory over De Grasse in April, and the final repulse of the attack on Gibraltar in September, did much to retrieve without affecting the inevitable result of the war; and the negotiation of the treaties of peace left England in 1783 shorn of the fairest portion of her Colonial Empire, and burdened by a huge increase of national indebtedness. The independence of America thus accomplished which seemed to imply the fall of Greater Britain, and which Seeley describes as a "stupendous event perhaps greater in itself than the French Revolution" so soon to follow, certainly forms a theme worthy of the ablest and best equipped of contemporary chroniclers.

Before following him in some comments and speculations on this event, a word may be said on the general attitude of the writer in relation to the play of international forces and rivalries. The late Professor Seeley made perhaps rather too much of his supposed discovery that the history of England in the eighteenth century lay not in Europe, but in Asia and America. The author of the *Annales* was a citizen of a small neutral State, his intellect was of the practical lucid order characteristic of the best eighteenth century thought, and his natural sympathies and tastes turned rather in the direction of efforts after freedom of thought, good government and sensible public economy, than in that of the internecine struggles for Colonial Empire and commercial monopolies which riveted the attention of the more sentimental Cambridge historian. But even to him these struggles were full of significance,

and if we may judge from the tone of the *Annales*, and even from the relative space given in its pages to the discussion of the war in America and to naval and colonial topics, contemporary writers were under no such illusion as that which Seeley made it his mission to combat in his interesting little volume on the *Expansion of England*.

The first number edited by Mallet du Pan contains a study on war in general, and on the condition of Europe as the result of the particular war in which the world was at that moment plunged, which would have delighted the heart of Cobden, but which, though perhaps somewhat academic in tone, displays an eloquence, a philosophic insight, and a knowledge of foreign history and politics quite beyond the reach of the great free-trade statesman. After showing that war was waged among modern States no longer with the simply avowed objects of conquering, pillaging and enslaving one another, but in order to preserve a supposed equilibrium or balance of power, he remarks how futile these attempts necessarily were, and how they always ended in the transfer of preponderance, never in its destruction. Richelieu's policy, for instance, had resulted in the ruin of Austria to the gain of France; and while Europe remained under arms until the Treaty of Aix la Chapelle in pursuit of this chimera, Great Britain, '*hydre amphibie*,' destined "to devour the frogs who implored her assistance," had appeared on the scene to which the "equilibrists" had summoned her. Mallet traces in a careful summary the growth of her maritime power, from its rise under Cromwell to its overwhelming ascendancy under Chatham. '*Voilà l'édifice*,' he



exclaimed, '*élevé par les criaileries, le sang et les dépenses de la Hollande et de l'Autriche, voilà l'espèce d'équilibre auquel leurs tours de force étaient parvenus !*'

Very striking is the denunciation which follows of the two-headed monster produced by the unnatural union of war and commerce, which owed its origin to the ocean power of England and Holland, and to the establishment of their colonies. Holland had tyrannised over the sea in order to become the *entrepôt* for every sort of merchandise; England, the first to escape from this tyranny by the help of Cromwell's Navigation Act, substituted for it another, with the object of forcing upon the two worlds her manufactures and the produce of her colonies.<sup>1</sup>

"The monopoly," wrote Mallet, "with which Europe oppressed her colonies is a despotism of shop-keepers of which every enlightened nation ought to be ashamed. To found an Empire and to base the prosperity of a country and its commerce upon the success of such a despotism, maintained by armaments, fleets and codes, is the most inconceivable project which avarice has ever suggested to ambition."<sup>2</sup>

But true as it was that commerce had become a primary cause of strife among nations, a phenomenon which seems likely to recur in the twentieth century, it was equally true that force was in the long run powerless to counteract the permanent influence of national advantages, geographical situation and industrial activity. The general indignation against the "vampire" powers of England and Holland, '*ces dispensateurs ambulants du commerce, approvisionneurs altiers de*

<sup>1</sup> *Annales*, iii., 486.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i., 107.

*l'Univers*,' had already without wars or diplomatic intrigue begun to work a cure, and the irresistible processes of competition were reducing the masters of commerce to the position of simple rivals in the Baltic and the Mediterranean. Mallet du Pan was in fact an economist, not indeed of the fashionable school which monopolised that designation and which he demolished in more than one of his articles, but of the school of Adam Smith, just about to make its first great proselyte among statesmen in the younger Pitt. Necessarily therefore he realised the essential want of reason in the existing colonial and commercial systems and reprobated the ruinous struggles which for sixty years had held Europe embroiled; and his remarks help us to realise how largely jealousy of England's success in the attempt to monopolise trade, the idea that she was a "leech gorging herself with their life blood," animated the coalition which was on the point of gaining a victory more nominal than real over their proud rival.

But Mallet du Pan did not allow himself to be engrossed by academic speculation, and we may now follow his description of the actual situation of the various combatants. Of Holland, '*morceau de boue enlevé à l'Espagne et à l'Océan*,' we need in this place only quote his remark that, having for eighty years limited her ambition to becoming the first purveyor of groceries in the universe and to amassing gold, the Republic with all her wealth was now nothing but a political skeleton. Spain, '*ombre illustre qui se promène sur ses vastes domaines sans que les mouvements de ce spectre aient pu masquer son inanité*,' was content to build fleets but afraid to use them except in sumptuous

promenades, and had wasted sums which might have materially assisted the American insurgents in a futile cannonade against Gibraltar. The future of the American Colonies is thus (before the surrender of Yorktown) summed up by our writer :—

“Independent or not the United States will emerge from this disastrous war with the hope of profit from it. Their commerce will be free, sooner or later it will embrace the fisheries of all their shores and of the new world and the trade in furs, it will reach to the Antilles, to the Spanish possessions, and even to the East Indies ; a line of communication will be theirs which no European fleet will be able to cut. Nature which has placed the insurgent States in the midst of the Atlantic has so ordered it ; and the moment has arrived when our continent will be forced to admit it.”

The moment when America was to come into full enjoyment of her natural advantages has been delayed to our own day, but the passage is none the less remarkable as a forecast written at a time when Europe still believed in the efficacy of force, of tariffs and of restriction to control the course of economic empire.

Of equal interest is the analysis of the situation of the two great protagonists, France and England ; of the sources of their power, and of the destinies which their history and their circumstances seemed to impose upon them. France had experienced something like a resurrection during the last six years. Under a king, for so he described Louis XVI., who had shown nothing but virtuous and benevolent intentions, and who in the course of seven years had chosen more upright ministers than a whole reign often supplies, she had



recreated a navy<sup>1</sup> and her policy, ably directed, had decided the success of the insurgent colonies and had seemingly dealt a fatal blow at the commercial monopoly of her rival. The resources of the country were immense, her natural wealth, the industry of her inhabitants, and the taste displayed in her varied manufactures, gave her a natural monopoly which made it unnecessary to seek external commerce by arms and maritime conquests. The power of her administration and her naval force would find sufficient employment in maintaining the water ways and safeguarding the ports, and in creating a wise proportion between the arts and agriculture.

In many noble passages Mallet du Pan extols the courage, energy and strength of her great rival :—

“ History affords no previous example of a nation of ten million souls, attacked in the four quarters of the world by a formidable league, resolute to withstand the attack, and allowing neither defeat nor waste, neither the want of men nor the burden of subsidies and loans, to shake her constancy. . . . The inexhaustible resources of her navy and her discipline, the activity of her dockyards, the energy of her traders, the cool intrepidity which grew with danger, and her command of funds, might be enfeebled but could not be destroyed.”

The effort, indeed, to maintain her dangerous prosperity had proved too great, and the pyramid balanced on its apex had crumbled beneath the weight. But writing after the final success of the magnificent defence of Gibraltar he says :—

<sup>1</sup> He remarks, however, on the insubordination which characterised the French navy, under De Grasse for instance, as contrasted with the discipline of an English fleet (*Annales*, v., p. 438).

“England by the energy of her resistance in the midst of her foes has gained a greatness and a renown more admirable than any she possessed at the height of her fortunes in 1763. . . . After having seen her arms tarnished, her fleets everywhere outnumbered, her territory threatened on all sides and her exertions counteracted by intestine strife, Great Britain now finds herself mistress of the sea in the West Indies, in America, and in the Channel; so far from having lost her Indian conquests she has added to them; her flag protects a commerce extending from pole to pole, and floats without a stain in spite of the efforts of three combined Powers to lower its glory.”

But all this time Mallet du Pan distrusted the power of the country to escape the consequences of the policy of expansion which her position forced upon her. Without the “possession of Neptune’s trident to enable her to summon fleets from the ocean at her will,” how could she protect with the wings of her 400 vessels the immense extent of her dominions?<sup>1</sup> The war itself had shown the “vice of this universal empire, and will impugn to the remotest posterity the wisdom of Lord Chatham’s policy”. After conquests comes the necessity of defending them, and that “necessity and these conquests are at this moment the greatest enemies of England; *son premier malheur est sa puissance*”.

The pose of a prophet is the last which Mallet du Pan’s modesty and vigorous common sense would have allowed him to adopt, and on so large a subject as the possible future of two great nations he could do no more than point out the tendencies which were likely

<sup>1</sup> *Annales*, iii., 80.

to mould their course. But if the above extracts give at all a fair idea of his speculations, he seems to have taken a more favourable view of the immediate prospects of France as compared with England than circumstances were to justify. He seems to have thought that France, self-contained, industrious, and with all the potentiality of great natural wealth, was at least as likely as England, depending rather on the adventurous disposition of her inhabitants, and bound to pursue the perilous paths of colonial and commercial extension and naval supremacy, to hold the leading place in the coming years. Few could have foretold, and Mallet du Pan certainly did not, the immense industrial development of Great Britain which inventive genius was to awaken, and a wise commercial policy to foster, in the coming century. Nor could the success of the great Indian experiment have been anticipated with any certainty. Mallet du Pan had written indeed (in April 1782) as follows:—

“The foot with which England trod the Atlantic she will now plant upon India. She will look for resources, for victories, and for consolations, to that immense domain which has been purchased with blood and treachery and despoiled by the ravages of unbridled human nature, and Holland may well groan under the ambition which the loss of her colonies will impel England to satisfy elsewhere.”

A little later (Dec. 1782) we find him asking what will become of England in the East Indies, and returning a more doubtful answer after a rapid sketch of the achievements and the dangers of the handful of British merchant conquerors. But it is interesting to note that at least he anticipates from the efforts of Parliament the



extirpation of the worst abuses of Indian administration, and pronounces that if the future can ameliorate the lot of the natives "so long oppressed by our avarice and our disputes, we shall bless the English as liberators".

But whether or no he fully realised the part which such factors as these were to play in the growth of England, and whether, horrified by the apparent demoralisation of her parliamentary system, he did not underrate the strength of the political constitution of the country, are questions of comparatively little moment. The event which was really to determine for a century to come the relative positions of the two countries as world powers lay still in the womb of the future, undiscernible, at all events in its consequences on the political system of Europe, to observers however keen-sighted. France was even now hastening with giant strides to revolution, and if we find no distinct premonition in Mallet du Pan's pages at this moment of the impending break up of the French monarchy, we must remember that he had not yet taken up his residence in Paris, and that while fully alive to the extravagance and vicious inequality of the financial system of the country, he was no doubt temporarily deceived<sup>1</sup> by the brilliant revival of vigour and

<sup>1</sup> "Qui aurait prédit," he wrote in September 1791 (*Mercur de France*), "que la France triomphante, riche, et considérée en 1782 serait réduite en 1791 à subsister de vieux cuivre, de débris de cloches, et de papier-monnaie perdant 15 pour cent dans la Capitale même? Que ses changes tomberaient de 25 pour cent . . . que ses fabriques ne se soutiendraient plus que par le discrédit des valeurs idéales représentatives du numéraire, que sa dette serait accrue de deux milliards en deux ans . . . que ses escadres resteraient inactives par la licence de ses matelots, que les dégoûts, la tyrannie, et l'impossibilité de servir honorablement l'État, la priveraient de tout ce qu'elle comptait

ability which had distinguished the last few years of the royal administration. It is indeed difficult to over-estimate the importance of the French Revolution in its influence on the development of Great Britain. It removed from her path at the most critical moment of her advance the only power which was in a position to dispute her supremacy. It left her without a rival at sea, the one factor essential to her success and to the consolidation of her conquests in India, and it gave her a monopoly, owing not so much to the employment of the artificial restrictive measures which Mallet du Pan had so vigorously condemned as to the literal absence from various causes of effective competition, in sea-borne commerce, in the carrying trade and in industrial production; a monopoly which she held till within the last twenty years. Truly did Burke say of the French, "they have done their business for us as rivals in a way which twenty Ramillies or Blenheims could never have done".

Whether a period in the history of the two nations may not now have been reached in which their strength is not once again more equally balanced, and whether Mallet du Pan's analysis of the respective advantages and dangers of France and England does not in a certain degree hold good at the present moment, is a tempting subject for speculation which can hardly be touched upon. On the one hand there is France, still, in spite of deep social divisions, one of the leading States in the world, with all her old natural superiority of territory and climate, with a population unrivalled

*de généraux expérimentés, et que ses Ambassadeurs ne seraient plus en Europe que les témoins de la nullité de leur Patrie? Quelle leçon pour la politique spéculative! O vanité des raisonnements!"*

for industry, economy and taste, with increasingly prosperous industries due to these qualities, with a navy second only to our own backed by a formidable military organisation, with her most important colonial dependencies, those in Northern Africa, placed at her very doors, above all with a form of government probably well suited to her genius, and to a large extent wisely inspired by the spirit which Mallet du Pan desiderated for her. On the other hand there is England, her special fields of supremacy in industrial production and in the carrying trade invaded by at least two great rivals with one of whom all competition is out of the question, and steadily impelled along the same path of colonial and commercial expansion dependent on naval force and ascendancy which seemed to have brought her to something like ruin at the close of the War of Independence. Is there any truth in Mallet's paradox that her misfortune lies in the very power and preponderance which condemn her "to go everywhere, to fight everywhere, to dissipate forces which would be invincible if they were concentrated, to depopulate her fields, her ports and her factories, and to support in the midst of opulence a debt of which no one can foresee the limits"? One thing at least is certain, that in any fresh crisis of her fortunes Great Britain is not likely to be assisted by any such cataclysmal event as the French Revolution, that her path will not be smoothed by the weakness of her rivals, and that she will be indebted alone for safety to the energy of her national character and institutions, to the loyalty of her dependencies, and to the wisdom of her statesmanship. The question suggested may perhaps be answered by another, Is there any real analogy between her present



situation and that of Holland in the eighteenth century? Mallet du Pan is never tired of contrasting the energy and courage of England with the '*affaissement absolu*' into which Holland had sunk, and the reasons he gives for the "inconceivable pusillanimity" of her conduct are, in the first place, that the commercial spirit had proved incompatible with patriotism, that the habits and tastes of the counting-house had debased national character and destroyed public spirit; and in the second place, (and this was the principal cause) that the spirit of faction had paralysed her councils. The ancient wisdom of the Republic had expired in the attempt to preserve a balance between the rival powers of the constitution, and foreign policy was perpetually sacrificed to the views of the warring cabals of the Stadholderate, the Magistracy, and the Regencies of Amsterdam and the other provinces. Might he not have added another possible cause of discouragement in the evident hopelessness of striving to preserve a colonial monopoly against antagonists so overwhelmingly superior in strength? Whatever sources of weakness may exist in the England of to-day, there are at all events two very marked points of distinction. British commercial and colonial supremacy has not been a tyranny, but a source of material prosperity which she has fully shared with all her competitors. The fall of the system therefore would inflict as great a loss upon them as upon herself, and they have the strongest reasons for desiring the maintenance of the only great open market in existence. The British Empire does not, or rather need not, excite that deadly jealousy of the rest of the world which was one of the causes of Holland's ruin, and any attempt on the part of rival powers to acquire British possessions for their

own exclusive exploitation must necessarily divide the enemies of England instead of uniting them against her. And further, the man who leads the country in an hour of need will have ready to his hand, instead of warring constitutional elements, the most supple and powerful instrument of rule which democracy has yet evolved. With all qualifications, however, the problem confronting Great Britain in the twentieth century is perhaps not wholly unlike that which Holland failed to solve in the eighteenth, that of combining commercial democracy with empire, a problem of which Mallet du Pan had in 1780 discerned some of the essential conditions.

We have noticed the admiration extorted from Mallet du Pan by the heroic energy and perseverance of the King and his ministers, supported year after year by Parliament and the country, in a cause with which he must have had but little sympathy. He had divined the reasons which in spite of defeats and growing financial embarrassment made the position of Great Britain in reality far less critical than it seemed. He put his finger on the essential fact of the situation when he pointed out the successful guardianship by the British squadrons of the return of the rich cargoes of the Baltic, the Hudson, the sugar islands and the East Indies to the seaports of the United Kingdom, there to swell private fortunes and to pour fresh resources into the depleted coffers of the State. As long as this circulation of wealth lasted he saw that England would maintain her existence and her activity; and he ridiculed accordingly the "innocent babble" of the coffee houses which had already annihilated her in anticipation. We have now to describe his undisguised concern at the

collapse of her resistance. Whatever doubt may have existed whether she might not, especially after Rodney's great victory and the relief of Gibraltar, have brought the struggle to a more favourable conclusion and even have preserved a nominal connection with her exhausted and distracted colonies, was set at rest by the attitude of the Opposition just about to be transformed into a Government, by the working of the party system and the play of faction in Parliament. This aspect of the question now fascinated the attention of Mallet du Pan, who, during the whole period, followed in detail the action and speeches of the party leaders in England with the object of setting before his readers a picture of the spirit, the eloquence, and the divisions of the British Parliament.<sup>1</sup> Liberal and republican as he was, it is impossible that a reader of these pages should not be struck by the essentially order-loving and conservative bent of his mind even at this early period. Long before the French Revolution was to make him famous as the pitiless analyst and critic of the Jacobin spirit, the unwearying opponent of revolutionary methods, he had learnt to distrust the incendiary teachings of the fashionable *phrasiers* of the day by watching their effect in those homes of ancient freedom, the Genevese and Dutch Republics. We have noted his attitude

<sup>1</sup> He commented on the extreme difficulty for a foreigner of following events in England, on the uncommunicativeness of the English and their proud contempt for foreign chroniclers, and on the haphazard character of their newspapers. Only an Englishman in the confidence of ministers and departments, and conversant with English commerce, law and finance could properly engage in the task of recounting the course of events, and such an Englishman would better employ his time. In these circumstances Mallet du Pan's penetration and accuracy are the more noteworthy.



with regard to French political and religious thought, and we shall have occasion to refer to his part in the revolutions of his native State; he saw how the cries and catchwords of "humanity, liberty, despotism," were inflaming the "patriotic" party in Holland, who were already burning to immolate on the altar of their country "oppressive" institutions and officers of state. He had commented on the loquacity which had accompanied the American Revolution, on the habit of "perorating and dissertating" which had characterised the founders and orators of the new Republic.

"One might fancy oneself," he said, "listening to language natural enough in gangrened Republics like Holland and Geneva, ready to crumble into dust, where the resource of perversity is to counterfeit virtue: but in America at the dawn of a new State, in the first term of its existence! Illustrious eighteenth century, thy motto has been traced by Sallust in the portrait of Catiline, *Loquentiæ satis sapientiæ parum!*"

Little wonder if, with such sentiments as these, he perused the debates preceding and following the fall of Lord North with growing horror and disgust at the unpatriotic and indecent violence of the Whig factions, an attitude which, reproduced in the French revolutionary war, was to cost them forty years of power; or that, "anti-imperialist" as he was, and opposed as we have seen him to be to the commercial and political ideas which inspired the war, he writes with far more sympathy of the fallen Ministry than of their opponents. We may pass over the epitome of the history of English party government in which Mallet du Pan traces the steps by which it had degenerated into a shamelessly corrupt struggle for place and power, for it is a

commonplace that the latter half of the eighteenth century witnessed the lowest point of degradation which party politics have touched in England. The successors of the old Whigs, "defenders of disputed rights, warding off oppression with one hand, with the other building up the ramparts of public freedom," had changed their character as the constitution had taken shape. Having no longer natural rights to assert, they were now, in Opposition, a mere *hors d'œuvre* of the constitution, whose occupation it was to harangue against the conduct and opinions of ministers in order to advertise themselves, and to oppose them, not because they were wrong, but because they were in power. Convinced of the determination of the king to stand by his advisers, the Opposition had latterly thrown restraint to the winds. "They exist only upon public disasters, each of which galvanises them into a momentary activity." The calmness, however, with which these violent diatribes were received by the public may have inspired the reflection that the spirit of faction is much more disastrous in a small state or city like Geneva, where the issues become of passionate interest to the whole population, than in a great city like London, where the mass of the inhabitants frequently remain totally indifferent to the parliamentary uproar of the Whigs and Tories, and the huge machine moves on undisturbed by the friction of the party wheels. Still he speaks with constant alarm of the "dangerous fury" of party spirit in England, and it is of interest to be reminded of the undoubted influence which its manifestation in this case exerted on the fortunes of the country. For there can be little question that it was the attitude of the Opposition which was the immediate cause of the precipitate and

undignified, if necessary, surrender to the Colonies and the coalition.<sup>1</sup>

There are few more interesting questions of parliamentary ethics than the proper attitude of an Opposition during a war of which they either disapprove on principle or are obliged by their situation to criticise. The problem which a public man has to solve as to when it is his duty to express his opinions and when to be silent, is one which will largely depend on the circumstances of the moment and on the prevailing standard of public morality and national feeling. In

<sup>1</sup> The purely military aspect of the struggle is of great interest, especially in view of the recent successful conclusion of a war of somewhat similar character in South Africa. The following description of it by Mallet in 1780 brings out some points of resemblance. The chief points of difference are of course the absence of generalship on the British side in the American war, the far greater difficulties of communication, and above all the fact of foreign intervention by land and sea.

On y aperçoit deux points lumineux . . . les Anglais s'éparpillant sur ce Continent, faisant des invasions plus que des conquêtes, courant de ville en ville, de province en province, chassant des milices devant eux, exigeant des serments, dévastant des chantiers et des magasins, envahissant des districts et finissant par les abandonner, en un mot remportant presque toujours l'avantage, et hors d'état de le poursuivre. Les insurgents emprisonnés au Nord sous leurs drapeaux faisant au Midi une guerre de partis balancée, se ralliant avec autant de facilité qu'on les disperse, et plus adroits à éluder des défaites que courageux à remporter des succès, mais tandis que leurs pelotons voltigeants coupent ou retardent les pas de leurs ennemis, l'épuisement est dans le cœur, et s'ils restent maîtres à la fin on verra se réaliser l'exemple inouï d'une République fondée avec des dettes, sans numéraire pour les acquitter, avec des paysans mous . . . des soldats sans pain et sans souliers, des matelots sans navires, des chefs sans union, un gouvernement sans consistance, des mœurs altérées, etc. (*Annales*, i., pp. 114, 115).



the eighteenth century the standard in these respects was such as to allow of conduct which we may safely assume would not be possible in similar circumstances at the present time. The following is Mallet du Pan's conception of what the behaviour of the Opposition should have been, contrasted with what it was:—

“Expelled from office, the same men who had co-operated in the bills for the taxation of America became the most active advocates of their abandonment. When Parliament refused to retrace its steps, they anathematised the war which, once it had been solemnly approved by the sovereign, each of its members should have accepted in silence. If the Opposition leaders had been worthy of the name of patriot—so universally and so vainly prostituted—after having defended at Westminster the cause of America, they should, the moment that cause had become a hostile one, have devoted themselves to the cause of England. Far from showing any such heroic docility, nothing came from their lips but the violence of revolt. They applied themselves, with all the zeal, perseverance and activity which the country expected in vain to be employed in obedience to the wishes of the sovereign, to the task of denouncing the forces under arms and of obstructing their success, of discouraging public spirit, of fanning the excitement of the insurgents, and stimulating their courage by revealing to them the existence in the metropolis of a party ready to support them, in a word to rendering their unnatural strife as disastrous as it has proved to be. Determined champions of the colonists and more ardently desirous of their enfranchisement than Congress itself, they recognised and preached independence before the United States had thought of it themselves, and they have loaded ministers with contumely for disasters of which they themselves were the real authors.”

Of the effect of this conduct on public opinion

abroad Mallet du Pan was a competent witness, and he speaks in the strongest terms of the influence of the Opposition harangues upon their dupes on the Continent, who greedily devoured these satires and calumnies. A continental journalist, he remarks, paid to scrape together defamatory intelligence, would take a fortnight to elaborate against the British Government the charges with which a single oration by Mr. Fox would furnish him.

Of that statesman, indeed, with his '*éloquence fougueuse et atrabilaire*,' his inflammable imagination, the flexibility of his opinions (a trait which distinguished the new from the old Whigs) and his private excesses, Mallet du Pan did not disguise his distrust; and he does not seem to have been much more favourably impressed by Burke's "inconceivable diatribes". But he pays a tribute to those Whigs who had abstained from the noisy violence of the more prominent party: to the lawyer-like integrity of Camden; to Conway, superior to all mean personal motives; to Lord John Cavendish, "of a house in which probity, honour and patriotism are hereditary"; to Keppel; to Dunning; and finally to Lord Shelburne, '*élève, émule, copiste même, de Lord Chatham, soldat d'Alexandre devenu roi après sa mort*,' influential from his talents, his connections, and the splendour of his private life; the tortuosities of whose political course, however, Mallet du Pan did not endeavour to follow. With greater warmth he speaks of Lord North, on whose dignified moderation during the months following his disgrace and his magnanimity in coming to the support of his perplexed successors he comments more than once, without perhaps comprehending, until North's complaisance led

him so far as to ally himself with Fox, the part which culpable indolence and good nature played in his political conduct.

The *Annales* contain some interesting comments on the inquiries into the conduct of military operations which, constantly proposed, were burked as far as possible by the Government and used by the Opposition to extol the inculcated commanders at the expense of a blundering Ministry, and he contrasts the conduct of the Whigs during this war with their behaviour during Lord Chatham's Administration, when, anxious to sustain the credit of the Government, they were untiring in support of Pitt's severest measures against unfortunate officers.<sup>1</sup>

It would be tedious to follow in detail his analysis of the debates on the peace negotiations which raged, as he says, "with tumults worthy of an assembly of savages" during the installation of Rockingham's Ministry and the premiership of Lord Shelburne. His general attitude has indeed already been indicated. He was astonished and scandalised at the revulsion of public opinion which overthrew Lord North and produced in Parliament a positive '*famine de la paix*,' an indecent eagerness to surrender all that the country had fought for. A dignified termination indeed was perhaps im-

<sup>1</sup> The recall of Rodney by the Rockingham Government after his ever-memorable defeat of De Grasse was the necessary result of the attacks which the Whigs had made upon him when in Opposition, and the admiral of the Tories was sacrificed quite as much to party resentment as to indignation at his disgraceful pillage of St. Eustatius, an event which our author stigmatises as it deserves, while doing full justice to the admiral's career in an excellent study of his character and his exploits.



possible, and the circumstances on which Mallet du Pan animadverted with a pained surprise which would have sat well on a loyal Englishman were perhaps a blessing in disguise, as bringing to a rapid and complete conclusion the most ignominious chapter in our history. However clearly we may see that the position had become untenable and that a nominal connection with ruined and exasperated colonies was not worth the undoubted risk of continuing the war, we may yet sympathise with the frame of mind which dictated the following words: "There is no patriotic man to whom the abandonment of America would not have appeared a calamity only inferior to the continuation of the war, a calamity, however, which was susceptible of alleviation in the clauses of the final treaty. It would not have crossed his mind to desire a sacrifice as complete and burdensome as possible, or to reject in advance the possibility of compensations,"—the course actually taken by that part of the Opposition which specially piqued itself on its public spirit.

The terms of peace as finally settled marked what may well have seemed to less perspicacious contemporaries the definitive fall of the country from the splendid position she had gained by the treaty of 1763. The vindication by half a hemisphere of its independence, as Mallet du Pan remarked itself one of the greatest events of the eighteenth century, stamped this treaty as the most important in its consequences since the peace of Westphalia, which had consecrated after thirty years of warfare the destruction of the political system of Charles V. But apart from this, the material results of the struggle in the shape of British cessions to Spain and France were singularly meagre when weighed

against the vast financial sacrifices which it had entailed upon all parties.<sup>1</sup> Most wars, however, as he remarked, gave rise to a similar reflection, and a veil had always to be drawn over their calamities and their costliness when it was a question of calculating the respective advantages of the combatants. As far as they went the advantages in the present case were with the allies. "With regard to this treaty the honour of it appears to remain with France, the danger with Spain, the good fortune with America, and I would add the disgrace with Great Britain if she had not so gloriously carried on hostilities. As for profit perhaps none can be claimed by any of them." On the whole Mallet du Pan questioned whether the results to Great Britain were as sinister as they appeared, whether the sacrifices she had made were not more specious than real, and whether the potentates of Europe would in the end have much to congratulate themselves upon in the example of insurrection which they had successfully encouraged in the New World.

<sup>1</sup> Mallet du Pan remarked of this war that it was, as regarded Europe, devoid of the horrors which had attended previous wars—"Tout se réduit à jeter des millions dans l'eau".

## CHAPTER III.

FRESH TROUBLES AT GENEVA—LIFE AND WORK IN  
PARIS

1783-1789.

NOWHERE in Europe, save in England, could a political writer have enjoyed the freedom in the expression of his opinions which a residence in the Republic of Geneva afforded to Mallet du Pan during these years.<sup>1</sup> But his work was subjected to interruption from a cause to which one who cared for his country's welfare could not remain indifferent, for the city was continuously a prey to domestic turmoil. Voltaire has described the faction fights of Geneva and the character of the people in the lines—

Chacun écrit, chacun fait son projet  
On représente et puis on représente  
A penser creux tout bourgeois se tourmente.

The struggle between the *natifs* on the one side and the aristocracy and bourgeoisie on the other had changed its character since Mallet's first intervention in 1770.

<sup>1</sup> "I have a few stray numbers of the *Annales*," wrote J. L. Mallet, "and can only say that a work conducted with such critical spirit, and so much political independence, would at this day be instantly suppressed if published in any part of Switzerland. So much for the comparative style of the press in 1775 and 1825."



The *natifs*, no longer oppressed, but on the contrary courted, by the privileged parties, had steadily gained ground at their expense, and the contest had resolved itself into one between the aristocratic senate and the democratic element in the constitution. In this contest the Council was certainly no longer the most imperious or exacting party, and it had become essential, if any sort of balance was to be preserved and civil freedom to continue to exist, that some compromise should be found which, while limiting the encroachments of the powers of the Government, might set bounds to the indiscretion of democratic zeal. Mallet du Pan accordingly, who had hitherto scrupulously refrained from any political action, broke silence in 1780 with proposals for conciliation,<sup>1</sup> including the introduction of the principle of irremovability in public employments, in which he and the most enlightened of his compatriots saw a chance of safety. That the pamphlet recommended itself to moderate minds is equivalent in a time of revolution to saying that its advice fell on deaf ears, and events proceeded until an appeal of the Council to the Powers which guaranteed the Genevese constitution, the Swiss Cantons and France, precipitated a revolutionary outbreak on the night of the 8th April 1782, when the *représentants* and the armed mob gained an almost bloodless victory and threw into prison the senatorial party and their friends. To this event probably belongs a note which Mallet appended to a belated number of the *Annales* containing an interesting study of the *Confessions* of Rousseau.

<sup>1</sup> *Idées soumises à l'examen de tous les conciliateurs par un médiateur sans conséquence, 1780.*

“This article,” he says, “should have appeared three weeks ago. An inconceivable event which has plunged a portion of the inhabitants of the city into alarm and captivity has made me a prisoner of war in my native State. In such a situation a man must be more of a philosopher than I can pretend to be to keep a cool head. I ask pardon of the public for the feebleness of this number. My only wonder is that I have been able to finish it at all. Each line has cost me an effort. I had never imagined that I should live to deplore having fixed the seat of my labours in a republic!”

For two months the popular party reigned unchecked, placing in the hands of a *Commission de Sûreté* of eleven members extraordinary powers, powers such as those “by which almost all republics have perished,” while the Swiss arbitrators in vain endeavoured to re-establish an equilibrium. Active intervention soon followed, an army of 10,000 Swiss Savoyard and French troops appeared before the walls, and, with the rest of the citizens, Mallet du Pan was, we are told, many a time called away from his writing-table to mount guard on the ramparts of the city. The approach of the Powers only stimulated the excitement of the people, but the general alarm at last induced the provisional Government to send a deputation to the quarters of the Comte de la Marmora who was at the head of the Savoyard troops, and who was well known and trusted in Geneva. Mallet du Pan was attached to the mission, but his efforts were frustrated by the fanaticism of the other commissioners and of the mob, and after some days of frantic agitation the allied troops effected an entrance into the town without serious resistance, and order was re-established at the

cost of the real independence and freedom of the Republic. "Another instance," wrote Mallet, "of liberty lost by attempts to increase it; over and over again have happy nations delivered themselves into chains by the search for a government free from abuses, which not a single one of them has ever succeeded in finding."

The episode ended, as far as he was concerned, by the courageous publication in the *Annales*<sup>1</sup> of a graphic and sombre account of the late events, in which the writer traced the "spirit, the immorality, the degradation of principles, which ruled in Geneva at the moment of her ruin". It drew upon him a furious attack from the extremists of both parties and particularly from Brissot, the revolutionary champion with whom he was destined to break many a lance in later days. It would be difficult to exaggerate the influence of these events on his political ideas, they finally disillusioned him with republican government as such, and taught him a lesson in democracy which left indelible traces on his mind, and must partly account for the marvellous prescience with which he judged from its opening days the probable course of the French Revolution.

About this time Linguet emerged from the Bastille, an event warmly welcomed in the *Annales* until his vanity and jealousy led him into an unwarrantable and ungenerous attack on Mallet du Pan, and finally opened his eyes to the character of his eccentric co-editor. From March 1783, therefore, Mallet carried on the work under the new title of *Mémoires historiques*,

<sup>1</sup> *Annales*, vol. iv., nos. 25, 26. "Nous étions saturés de liberté, les derniers troubles en furent les indigestions."



*politiques et littéraires sur l'état présent de l'Europe*<sup>1</sup> for a few months, until an offer from Paris induced him to break off an enterprise which he had carried on under many difficulties and with only moderate financial success.

Political journalism on the Continent, or at least the wide circulation of gazettes containing political criticism and news, may be said to date from the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes; and Holland, the refuge of all who had suffered from religious or political persecution, was its headquarters. The journals published there in the French language were of two sorts, those which like the famous *Gazette d'Amsterdam* or *Gazette de Hollande* (*véhicule*, as Bayle described it, *de toutes les médisances de l'Europe*), foreign papers written in French as the political language of Europe, were habitually hostile to France; and secondly those which were written specially for French readers, French papers published abroad because their publication in France was not allowed. Both kinds, but especially the latter, whether unauthorised or allowed as a result of financial contract with the Foreign Office, were widely circulated in France before the Revolution, and supple-

<sup>1</sup> The *Annales* had been carried on under his sole control since the beginning of 1781, and thirty-six numbers in five volumes had been published; the *Mémoires* formed another volume of ten numbers. "Nec temere nec timide" was the motto which Mallet had prefixed to his journal. The account given in the text indicates the character of the work and its importance in the history of continental journalism; that it found a certain amount of public favour is clear from the fact that a translation was printed periodically in Florence, as well as two pirated editions in Switzerland and in the Netherlands, and that although it was forbidden in France it had a certain circulation in that country.

mented to the great satisfaction of the public the sterility of the Official *Gazette de France*, whose exclusive privilege it was '*de ne rien dire ou de dire des riens*'. The beginning of the century (1704) had indeed seen the establishment of the *Journal de Verdun*, the first French newspaper which treated in however discreet a fashion of history and passing events, and of the *Mercure*, founded in the preceding century as the *Mercure galant* which later developed as the *Mercure de France* into a literary and miscellaneous journal of great importance and politically became an official paper of the type of the *Gazette*. But it was the enterprise of the great publisher Panckoucke, son of a bookseller and writer of Lille who arrived in Paris to pursue his father's calling in 1764, which first made serious political journalism possible in France, and he owed his success in this respect, as we shall see, to his discernment in the choice of Mallet du Pan for the editorship of his new venture in connection with the *Mercure de France*.

At the time of which we are speaking (1783) Panckoucke had fully established his position as the business head of French literature. He had been the publisher of the encyclopædia and of Buffon's works, and he had amassed a large fortune while behaving with noble generosity to men of letters who owed to him a sensible amelioration of their hitherto unfortunate condition. He thus, as his brother-in-law Suard relates, became the friend and equal of the men of genius for whom his presses were at work, and his splendid houses, in Paris near the old Comédie Française and the Café Procope, and at the Bois de Boulogne, were the centre of a distinguished literary and artistic circle; while his relations with men like Rousseau, Buffon, and Voltaire,

whose writings had become affairs of state, brought him into relationship with ministers. His journalistic ventures alone must have ensured him more than enough attention from the Government, for he had control of the two official journals, the *Gazette* and the *Mercure*. In 1772 he had obtained permission to print in Paris a *Journal historique et politique*, known until the Revolution as the *Journal de Genève*; and soon after, buying up some competing papers, he consolidated them under the title of *Journal de Bruxelles*, as editor of which we have seen that he introduced Linguet to journalism. He now decided to unite to the *Mercure de France* the political journal which appeared weekly under the double title of *Journal de Bruxelles* and *Journal historique et politique de Genève*, and offered Mallet du Pan the editorship<sup>1</sup> of the latter, reserving

<sup>1</sup> By the contract signed in March 1784, Mallet du Pan was to receive as salary 7,200 livres a year, and 1,200 livres in addition for articles in the literary portion of the *Mercure* (about £350 a year), with an addition of one livre for every copy sold over 10,259—a remuneration which Mr. Hatin describes as marking the high value put upon his services. Under this contract he seems to have received between 9,000 and 10,000 francs a year. Subsequent arrangements, as the circulation grew and the political portion became increasingly important, raised the editor's remuneration, until in 1789 Panckoucke, in acknowledgment of the "constant success" of the journal since 1784 under Mallet's management, raised his salary to 12,000 francs a year, with 2,000 francs for every 1,000 additional subscriptions, and promised a pension to him if incapacitated, or to his widow in case of his death. And in 1790 the proprietorship of the *Mercure historique et politique*, whether published at Brussels or elsewhere, was divided between Mallet and Panckoucke. In 1791 Panckoucke engaged to pay him a salary of 18,000 francs. But by this time the unpopular opinions advocated in the *Mercure politique* and the persecution to which it was subjected had seriously affected its circulation;



the right to compose from it the *Journal de Bruxelles* which was joined to the *Mercure* and appeared with it every Saturday. Mallet du Pan thus became in effect what he became titularly somewhat later,<sup>1</sup> sole editor of the political portion of the *Mercure*; the editors of the literary portion being the academicians Marmontel, Suard and La Harpe, the latter chiefly known to modern readers as the author of the *Prophétie de Cazotte* in which the fate of the social and literary flower of France in the Revolution is so dramatically and terribly portrayed. It may be added that during the whole period of their connection, and even after it had ceased, the relationship of Mallet du Pan and Panckoucke and their families remained on the most cordial and friendly footing. The following boyish recollections of Panckoucke and his family by Mallet's son may here be quoted:—

“M. Panckoucke had a son, afterwards a distinguished man of letters, and two daughters; the son the youngest of the three; all clever children, for whose education no expenses were spared, who had access to collections of prints and drawings and to a fine

Panckoucke protested that it caused him a loss in 1791, and when Mallet left Paris in the spring of 1792 his salary was in arrear. In reply to his applications Panckoucke wrote in 1793 describing the ruin which, in spite of his efforts by starting journals on the revolutionary side, such as the *Moniteur*, had overtaken him, and pitifully begging for time to defray his debt. The first contract gave Mallet in addition books and engravings and works of art and of industry which came in for notice, Panckoucke reserving only the music. It is necessary to add that a less scrupulous editor might easily have enriched himself by Government pensions and gratuities.

<sup>1</sup> In 1788. From this date till its demise in 1792 the *Journal de Genève* was apparently published also separately in Geneva.

library, besides the advantage of a constant intercourse with men of letters and artists. Panckoucke himself, an odd, clever man, with some genius and no small eccentricity of character, took great pains to cultivate their tastes, and at a later period of his life, when the Revolution had destroyed his princely fortune, and nearly turned his brain, he wrote a grammar of the French language for the use of his son, which is a work of considerable merit. An intercourse with this family ought to have been a great advantage to us, as we lived within a short walk of each other;<sup>1</sup> but when we met it was to play at hide-and-seek in the garden passages and staircase of the Hôtel de Thou, and not to compare notes of our studies.”<sup>2</sup>

The outward aspect of the newspaper which formed Mallet du Pan's occupation during the ten best years of his life was that of a small pamphlet of something like 150 pages. The number published on Saturday 30th June 1787, to choose almost at random, began of course with the literary or real *Mercure*. It opened with a few short pieces of verse, in this case some lines on *Le Temps présent*, followed by an elaborate *acrostiche* by several writers, a charade, an enigma, and a *logogriphe*. Then followed a long review by Mallet du Pan of a history of Queen Elizabeth by Mdlle de Kéralio, a criticism under the head *Spectacles* of a drama entitled *Tarare*, and under the head *Variétés* a semi-serious *causerie* on the *guichets* or passages leading from one quarter of Paris to another, a letter to the editors on an exhibition of pictures by art students, and short notices of books, engravings and music. This part of the paper closes with the formal “approbation”

<sup>1</sup> Mallet du Pan lived in Paris in the Rue de Tournon (No. 9), the spacious street leading up to the Palais du Luxembourg which still retains its eighteenth century character.

<sup>2</sup> *Reminiscences*.

of the censor. The *Journal politique*, which forms the second portion, contains articles on correspondence from Vienna, from Frankfort, and from Madrid, with various items of news; one from London, which happens to be of no particular interest, commenting on the health of the Prince of Wales, the movements of ships of war and the launch of the Orion, the speech of the Viceroy of Ireland proroguing Parliament (given in full), on Mr. Pitt's departmental economies, and on a visit of the royal family to Mr. Whitbread's brewery—'*établissement prodigieux*,' and concluding with an anecdote of the great Lord Chatham. Under the head of "France" (which generally begins with court intelligence such as signatures by the royal family of the contracts of marriage of the nobility, presentations and appointments) there is a royal order (*règlement*) on finance and commerce, an account of a fire at the Tuileries, of certain architectural work in Paris, of a sitting of the Academy of Arras, and the text of the Treaty of Commerce between France and Russia, and items on the *Rentes* and *Loteries*. The number ends with an article on political events in the Netherlands.

Mallet's son has left an account of the life led by the writer in Paris, unfortunately wanting in minuteness which is not supplied by the diary kept by Mallet du Pan himself. As time went on his life clearly became less isolated (Buffon was one of the few eminent men of this time whom he seems to have known intimately), and he occupied himself in studying the public life of Paris in many aspects, visiting prisons and institutions of all kinds. But the life of the man was his work, and it is useless to look for picturesque or amusing details such as many other memoirs of the time supply.



“ My family had no natural connections or acquaintances in Paris, and our life there during the first two or three years was altogether domestic. My father as a man of letters had access to a large and distinguished circle, but he availed himself very sparingly of this advantage. His life was laborious, he took regular exercise, and had but little leisure for the literary and fashionable *coteries* of Paris, the moral atmosphere of which was not congenial to his tastes and habits. Educated with simplicity, and under the influence of moral feelings, he looked with no favourable eye on the luxurious and loose course of life of the higher classes in Paris, and was perhaps too much inclined to treat with contempt the philosophical pretensions of the salons. He had been accustomed at Geneva to great freedom of opinion and speech, and wanted that easy and graceful acquiescence which can alone make us acceptable guests at the tables of the great. My father likewise laboured under some disadvantages in his intercourse with the men of letters of Paris ; for, independently of his being a sort of intruder in that field, where many of them reaped a harvest of pensions and laurels, they did not see without jealousy one of their most valuable literary stalls filled by a stranger ; nor did the earnestness of his opinions harmonise with the general tone of French conversation. A better school of opinion prevailed at that time than when Diderot and D’Holbach’s parties reigned supreme. Suard and Marmontel were moderate and reasonable men ; but the *Encyclopédie* was still high on the horizon, and a young Genevese who ventured to dispute its decisions was not likely to meet with much indulgence. Nor was my father more fortunate in his politics ; for he was shocked on the one hand with the levity of the people, the profligacy of the higher classes, the arbitrary tone and measures of the Government, and on the other, did not see without surprise and fearful anticipations, those searching questions which arose out of the American war brought

to the bar of every drawing-room. The manner in which these questions were discussed, and the opinions which generally prevailed on political subjects, were so much at variance with the Government *de facto*, and the demoralised state of society; so inconsistent with everything *that was*, that my father, although born a Republican, and sensitively alive to the blessings of freedom, often found himself checking that spirit of indiscriminate innovation which seemed ready to break through all restraints. His notes on passing events, from 1785 to 1793, confirm the impressions generally entertained of the low estimate in which the French Government was held at the period immediately preceding the Revolution, and its apparent unconsciousness of the contempt in which it was held. The court and ministers went on with their worn-out machinery, interfering in every way with the press, with courts of justice, and private rights; issuing *Lettres de Cachet*, and bold enough against individuals, but wavering and irresolute in all measures of real moment, distributing pensions and gratuities to literary men, almost all engaged in pulling down the old fabric; and on the eve of a Revolution so pregnant with calamities, the people apparently as light-hearted as in the gayest times of the Monarchy. Gluck and Picini, Cagliostro, and the 'Mariage de Figaro,' successively engrossing the public mind! Such times were full of subjects for observation to a man of sense and political discernment, and if my father's daily occupations had been less urgent, his temperament more calm, and the interest he took in the Revolution of a less intense and painful nature, he might have collected and left valuable memoirs. The rapid progress of events furnished ample materials for a periodical publication; but although my father did not feel the irksome necessity of enlarging upon trifling circumstances, and of substituting conjectural observations for facts, so frequently the lot of periodical writers, the importance and interest of daily occurrences, and the mass of information which flowed from every quarter

required his undivided attention; and the analysing these materials for the press, the distinguishing how far party feelings might prevail over truth, and the commenting with spirit and discrimination on the occurrences of the week, was a task of great labour and difficulty. The talent for a quick and powerful analysis is not uncommon in this country; but independently of the superiority of the *Mercur*e as a periodical work, there is a marked difference between an avowed and an anonymous publication. My father's name was affixed to his writings, whereas the London periodical publications are nearly all anonymous. Still greater difficulties, however, stood in my father's way. From the time that he undertook the political part of the *Mercur*e, in the year 1783, to the period of the Revolution, a most rigid and capricious censorship left him in a state of complete uncertainty as to the fate of the sheets prepared for publication. He entertained upon many great questions, both of home and foreign policy, opinions altogether at variance with those of the Government. Few numbers of the *Mercur*e, therefore, escaped the severe scrutiny of the censors; and I have heard him say, that in consequence of the suppression of entire articles, he was frequently under the necessity of supplying many pages of new matter within a few hours of going to press!"<sup>1</sup>

A contemporary account describes the nature of the *Journal politique*. "This journal takes the place of all the gazettes, it is compiled from all the public prints of Europe and from special correspondences established in the capitals. The facts are connected with so much method and with such scrupulous exactness that the news of the different kingdoms is given in the form of materials ready for use as history, and their description applies more particularly to the account of English affairs." Three censors watched over the

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*



publication, but for a writer of Mallet's historical turn of mind the restriction may have been less irksome than it seemed, and he was at all events enabled to realise in a more satisfactory manner than before his ideal of the more important functions of the journalist, that of distinguishing between truth and falsehood, and presenting important facts in their proper perspective. The volumes which contain his articles at this period are doubtless less interesting to the general reader than the *Annales* in which he was free to comment on political events; but the years which the writer was now to spend in sifting and studying European affairs must have immensely ripened his judgment and increased his store of knowledge. In foreign affairs, as we shall see, he was allowed rather more freedom than in domestic matters, except where the Government had some line of policy or intrigue to advocate, and he possessed the art which served him well of confining his comments to short but illuminating paragraphs, and of enlivening the course of his narrative by summary observations which gave it meaning and supplied food for reflection. By a curious contradiction also, the literary part of the *Mercure* was comparatively free from this censorship; and in his articles on philosophic, economic, and historical works, Mallet was accordingly able to introduce the larger treatment of political affairs, the absence of which had hitherto kept French journalism at so great a distance from periodical writing in England and even in Germany. In all his writing from this time may be found the note of almost exaggerated distrust of theorists,<sup>1</sup> of hostility to meta-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. an article on Grotius, whom he calls *ennemi méthodique du genre humain* !

physical systems and eloquent generalisations, of contempt for the crude doctrines and rash speculations promulgated by the successors of Rousseau. This attitude, however, sprang from no indifference to the real interests and condition of the people. In an article, for instance, on a project for establishing new hospitals in Paris we find him asking why the sufferings of the people seem to increase with the external prosperity of States; he continually dwells on the intolerable burden of taxation on the poor caused by bad laws: he lauds the growth of religious toleration in Europe, and notices with satisfaction the profound humanity which had distinguished the debates in the House of Commons on the proposal to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts, and the commencement of Wilberforce's noble campaign against slavery. Nor was his sympathy with free institutions the less sincere because he refused to take words for realities and identify freedom with the forms of a republic, or because he had come to see in a limited monarchy the best guarantee for the security and happiness of a State. The horrors of the Revolution led him in 1793 to repeat the maxim which, as he then said, had for fifteen years guided his thoughts :—

For forms of government let fools contest  
Whate'er is best administered is best.

His natural prepossession in favour of liberal political systems accordingly did not prevent him even at this time from passing an eloquent eulogy on Frederick of Prussia and the great machine of state, with its laborious activity, its plans always prepared with mature thought and carried out with perseverance, which his firm will

had inspired. But Mallet's thoughts turned with increasing admiration to England<sup>1</sup> where the dangers both domestic and external which had seemed to threaten her very existence were vanishing one by one under the vivifying rule of Chatham's "astonishing" son. In his alarm at the violence of party and the instability of Governments, he had but half suspected the resources of a constitution which, after three Cabinet revolutions, gave England an administration proof against assault and strong in the confidence of both King and people, just at the moment when it was necessary to lay afresh the foundations of the national power. He watched with wonder the re-establishment of the finances, the activity of the legislature, the growth of the population, the progress of invention and industry, and the extension of commerce. The general confidence in the foresight and talents of the Minister and the suspension of party strife taught him that faction lost half its danger in a country where party differences were not differences of irreconcilable principle. "For eighty years a Tory had been the friend of monarchy without abandoning liberty, and a Whig the friend of liberty without renouncing monarchy." Finally, sympathising for the most part with Pitt's enlightened measures, he was now also able to appreciate his rival Fox, whom he described in 1787 as "the most talented of European statesmen, worthy to govern an empire while his associates harangued it". He followed their speeches from this

<sup>1</sup> "Il est à remarquer," he writes in his diary, "que les trois Puissances qui ont servi les insurgents contre les Anglais ont été toutes trois abimées par cette intervention qui devrait écraser l'Angleterre, tandis que celle-ci s'est élevée au plus haut degré de prospérité, d'union, de commerce, de navigation, d'amélioration dans ses finances."



time forward so closely that he might almost have said with Byron :—

We, we have seen the intellectual race  
Of giants stand like Titans face to face,  
Athos and Ida with a dashing sea  
Of eloquence between.

The commercial treaty with France was the one of Pitt's measures which excited his keenest interest, inspired as it was by the teaching of Adam Smith, "the most profound and philosophic of all the metaphysical writers who have dealt with economic questions". The writings of Adam Smith appealed to Mallet precisely because of their freedom from doctrinairism. The best economic writings, he said, quite in the spirit of the modern historical school, were those of Smith in England and of MM. de Fourbonnais and Necker in France, which were not so much "general treatises as books for the special use of the states in which they had been composed". "The modern doctors think their circumspection puerile and unworthy of genius, an opinion which is not surprising in persons accustomed to govern the whole world by phrases." He constantly deprecated insistence on so-called principles. Nations were not '*des pièces de charpente*,' which can be arranged in a workshop on a definite plan. What is practicable in one State is not so in another, and theories in legislation must bend to local circumstances. It was from this point of view that Mallet warmly championed Pitt's treaty which was beginning to be unpopular in France just when it was becoming acceptable in England. Without maintaining that free trade was beneficial between countries at different stages of development, he argued that the economic condition

of France and England made closer commercial relations of self-evident advantage to both countries.

The event, however, which filled a larger space in his articles on English affairs during the years 1786-8 than any other was the trial of Warren Hastings. There are few more curious or characteristic pages in the history of the expansion of England than this famous trial. It was extraordinary, as Mallet du Pan observed, that a "nation which had usurped a great part of Hindustan should wish to superimpose the rules of morality upon those of an administration based essentially on force, injustice and violence"; and that it should reward with impeachment the man who had preserved the Indian conquests against greater odds than those which in other parts of the Empire had inflicted such disastrous losses on Great Britain. The spectacle was well calculated to revive traditional charges of British hypocrisy, especially when motives of personal spite and party animosity were seen to play a large part in the proceedings against the ex-Governor General.<sup>1</sup> Yet nothing can be more

<sup>1</sup> "A short time previously to the resignation of the Earl of Mansfield as Lord Chief Justice a motion was made in Parliament by Mr. Elliott, a friend of Mr. Pitt's, recommending a pension to the Lord Chief Justice in consideration of his great services and his great age. Lord Mansfield, who was not, it seems, fully aware of the purport of the motion, sent the next day for Sir John Macpherson and desired him to ascertain whether he was to take it as a hint to resign. Sir John applied to Sir Archibald Macdonald, who spoke to Mr. Pitt, by whom he was assured that he did not wish Lord Mansfield to retire one day sooner than he might think it proper. The Chief Justice, however, soon resigned; but on his return to him with the information he had obtained, Sir J. Macpherson was asked by Lord Mansfield what he thought of Mr. Pitt. 'I think, my Lord, that he is a great minister.' 'Ah, Sir John,' rejoined the

certain than that indifference to the abuses of mal-administration, corruption and violence, which the parliamentary inquiries of 1782 had revealed, would have stamped the British legislature as unworthy of the responsibility of empire; and it was no great step from attempts to reform the Government of India to attacks on the man whom the proprietors of the East India Company had retained in power in defiance of both Parliament and the directors. Mallet du Pan indeed recognised that "whatever the issue of the trial it would do honour to the British Constitution," as proving that neither credit, nor wealth, nor the merit attaching to great services, could shield an administrator from an examination into his conduct. It would have been natural for one who had sympathised with the objects of Fox's East India Bill to have accepted the popular view of Warren Hastings. But the unmeasured abuse of which he became the object soon revolted Mallet's

judge in his peculiar voice, '*A great little minister*. Did you ever hear, Sir John, of a minister prosecuting another minister? Would a great minister have suffered Mr. Hastings to be arraigned?' 'Justice may have required it,' said Sir John. 'Justice, Sir John, what is political justice? who is she? where is she? did you ever see her? Do you know her colour? Her colour is Blood! I have administered justice for forty years, but that was justice between man and man; as to justice between one minister and another I know not what it means.'

"This anecdote having been related to Lord Thurlow by Sir John Macpherson, 'Sir,' said old Surly, 'you need not have said that this was spoken by Lord Mansfield. He was a man who was right ninety-nine times out of a hundred; and if he chanced to err there is not one man out of a hundred who could find it out.'

"This anecdote is related with some variations in the second part of *Wraxall's Memoirs*—Wraxall had it no doubt from Sir John Macpherson" (J. L. Mallet's *Reminiscences*).



sense of justice, and his anglophile susceptibilities were no doubt aroused by the malevolence which the public washing of English dirty linen excited among the tribe of continental gazetteers. He accordingly informed Hastings through a common friend, that if he would furnish notes on the principal heads of charge he would endeavour to give a fairer statement of the arguments than could be collected from the speeches of the managers of the impeachment.<sup>1</sup> Hastings gratefully availed himself of the offer, and Mallet du Pan accordingly made use of this information in his analyses

<sup>1</sup> Mallet du Pan's son, who was at school in England at this time, writes as follows: "I had been twice to the House of Lords during the trial, and the person of Mr. Hastings, his white hair, the fine character of his head, and the situation in which he stood at the Bar, had strongly excited my sympathy. Mr. Burke's impassioned and almost vindictive manner and looks, whilst speaking in the Manager's Box (of which I have a distinct recollection, as well as of the great man himself, dressed in a snuff-coloured suit, with bag and sword), had likewise contributed to give me an unfavourable impression of a cause in which so much party-spirit seemed to be engaged." At a later date when he was again in London seeking employment, he relates (1797) how Hastings called upon him ("ce que n'a fait aucune autre personne"), invited him to his house, and "entered at length and with great indulgence into the objects of my journey to this country. He warned me not to be too sanguine, for the difficulties of procuring a situation for a foreigner were considerable; and added, that his desire of avoiding all appearance of private solicitation in his own cause had prevented him on his return from India from cultivating the society of persons of rank and influence, to whom he had but little access; but that he retained a strong sense of his obligations to my father, and would do for me whatever lay in his power. As he was going out of town for some weeks, he desired me to write to him if I thought he could be of any service, offered me his purse and his house, and left me strongly impressed with the kindness of my reception."

and comments on the speeches. As may be imagined his advocacy of an unpopular cause drew down upon him savage attacks from the French press. Clavière and Brissot printed an abusive pamphlet against him, and Brissot and Mirabeau together entered into a violent controversy<sup>1</sup> with him, insinuating that he had been bought by Nabob gold. But posterity in this as in some other matters has vindicated the judgment of the journalist, and recognised the truth of Warren Hastings' own contention when he said: "No man in a station similar to mine, and with powers so cramped and variable as mine were, ever laboured with so passionate a zeal for the welfare of a nation as I did to promote the happiness and prosperity of the people under our jurisdiction".

It is unnecessary to dwell on the many proofs afforded by Mallet du Pan's writings of his familiarity with and appreciation of English institutions, history and literature, and of his sympathy with much in the national character which he seems instinctively to have

<sup>1</sup> In the *Analyse des Papiers Anglais*, Mirabeau's newly founded journal, which he had for some reason, probably because of his support to the revolutionary party in Holland and his advocacy of the Government's policy in regard to that country, obtained permission to publish free from censorship. He proceeded to pass judgment on the politics of the whole of Europe in spite of Panckoucke's protests, who complained that his privilege was being violated, and he waged war on Mallet du Pan. Brissot, who assisted Mirabeau in the campaign, writes in his memoirs (ii., 385): "I must do our adversary the justice to say that he had a wide knowledge of history and was well acquainted with the subjects on which he wrote, while Mirabeau was entirely without information".

Mirabeau's journalistic career, however, forms an important landmark in the struggle for the liberty of the press in France.

preferred to that of the people among whom his lot was cast. He gave the strongest indication of this preference when he chose England as the place of education of his eldest son, a fortunate choice which doubtless decided the future nationality of his descendants. The boy accordingly spent three years, from 1786 to 1789, at school or in families in this country, and returned to Paris a pronounced anglo-maniac as the following passage in which he describes his return shows:—<sup>1</sup>

“We did not go straight to Paris the evening of our arrival, but to a villa of Panckoucke’s in the Bois de Boulogne, the summer residence of his family. The English mania was then at its height; and Grimm, in his memoirs, does not overstate the rage that prevailed for everything English, save and except the English Constitution, to which no one thought it desirable to assimilate the new political institutions of the country. Grimm, who no doubt prided himself on his costume and the fashions of his own time, is angry beyond measure with this English mania, and draws some very absurd conclusions from it; but it could not fail to be agreeable to a lad just landed from Dover, and completely equipped *à l’Anglaise*. The morning after my arrival the young ladies were not satisfied till they had completely rummaged all my baggage, and feasted their eyes on English clothes, an English dressing apparatus, English trinkets, and even English boots, of which the leather, as I well remember, was handled by delicate female hands, and praised for its remarkable softness and pliancy.”

It is not to the pages of the *Mercure* with its formal official announcements and uninteresting record

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences*.



of unimportant passing events, that we can turn for a picture of pre-revolutionary France. For here the three censors were inexorable, permitting no comment on internal political events.<sup>1</sup>

"A political writer," indeed, writes J. L. Mallet,<sup>2</sup> "was at that time a considerable person at Paris, and my father's talents and independence insured him public distinction of some sort or other. But the political part of the *Mercure* was necessarily of inferior importance so long as the Government exercised a strict censure over all political opinions; for, careless as they were to the publication of the *Encyclopédie*, Rousseau and Diderot's works, Raynal's *History of the Indies*, and the many able publications in which the principles of religion, morals, government, were eloquently and fearlessly discussed, the French Ministry watched a newspaper paragraph, or the announcement of the most insignificant piece of intelligence, with the most jealous eye. Even within a few months of the Revolution and of those political convulsions which laid the whole fabric of government prostrate, the Abbé Auger, censor of the *Mercure*, went on with an unsparing hand, cutting up my father's manuscript, suppressing his remarks on the affairs of Holland, and even simple statements of fact such as the King of Prussia's death, and notices of the publication of Necker's *Mémoire Justificatif* and of Calonne's dismissal."

The morbid sensibility of the Government extended not only to matters of fact and of opinion, but even to modes of expression; the censor, for instance, objected to the Stadtholder being described as Prince of Orange and three times substituted the

<sup>1</sup> "On suit en France l'axiome opposé à *dicere de vitiis parcere personis*. On défend de parler des choses, et l'on tolère les insultes aux personnes" (Mallet du Pan's Notes).

<sup>2</sup> *Reminiscences*.

word Nassau for Orange. On Dutch affairs generally Mallet du Pan more than once found himself in conflict with the Ministry, for when he had a strong opinion his inflexibility of character made it difficult for him to avoid giving offence, and he was utterly incapable of writing to order. Holland was during the years preceding the Revolution a centre of diplomatic intrigue. The French Government endeavoured to dominate Dutch politics by encouraging the democratic agitation which had gained so dangerous a foothold in the effete Republic, and which culminated, to the surprise and even consternation of Versailles, in the insurrection of 1786 and the flight of the Stadtholder. Mallet du Pan had foretold that this imprudent and unprincipled policy would result in the interference of the Powers, England and Prussia, which supported the Stadtholderate; he had seen enough of revolutionary violence to assure him that it generally meant the ruin of free States; he considered that it was not the business of Governments to make revolutions; and the effect upon public opinion in France of the American war (the "American inoculation" was his phrase) caused him to view with the utmost alarm the repetition by the Foreign Minister, Vergennes, of the mistake of favouring insurrection abroad.<sup>1</sup> During the disturbances which were followed in 1787 by the Prussian invasion of Holland, he accordingly wrote in this sense against

<sup>1</sup> The following sentence is from Mallet du Pan's private notebook, "Le Gouvernement de France a successivement détruit toutes les formes de gouvernement en divers états. La démocratie, selon lui toujours funeste, il l'a détruite à Genève pour y établir l'aristocratie, détruit l'aristocratie en Suède pour y substituer la Monarchie, l'aristocratie en Amérique pour y substituer la démocratie!"

the policy of the Ministry, and Vergennes, to whom the censor had communicated his article, stopped the press, had an article written in a contrary sense and instructed Mallet du Pan to insert it. Mallet immediately went to Versailles and, having requested an audience of the Minister, informed him that he considered the notice he had just received as an order to return the privilege which had been granted him, and that he came to surrender his licence rather than write against his conscience. Struck with this spirit of independence in a man whose subsistence depended on his pen, the Minister seized his hand and exclaimed: "This must not be; you will give up your article, I shall give up mine, and we will remain friends". A tribute indeed from the man who said that next to an author what he most despised was a book!

Under the Comte de Montmorin, who succeeded Vergennes in 1787, Mallet's position became increasingly difficult. His judgment had proved too correct to please the Government, and it exposed him to the denunciations of the Dutch patriots and their French sympathisers who, like Mirabeau, besieged the Foreign Office with complaints against him. He was threatened with the loss of his editorship, and worse, if he did not show greater complaisance. He wrote a very outspoken letter of remonstrance to Montmorin, which another minister might, as he said, probably have answered by a *lettre de cachet*. But Montmorin, between whom and the writer a feeling of warm regard was to spring up in later days, took it in good part, and even rendered Mallet du Pan a service by frustrating an intrigue of Mirabeau to get the *Mercur*e transferred



to himself by accusing Mallet of being a rabid Anglo-maniac, treacherously writing against the views of the Government.

"If," wrote Mallet at a later date<sup>1</sup> in reply to accusations of being in the pay of the court, "I did not during the six years I lived under the old Government lose my establishment and become a prisoner in the Bastille, I owe it to the consistency of my attitude to the authorities, and to my offers of retirement a hundred times repeated. . . . Determined to lose all rather than sacrifice my independence, I declared over and over again to various ministers that they might suppress all I wrote, but that they should never extract from me a line or a eulogy contrary to my conscience."

This line of conduct, whatever its merits, did not add to the interest of the paper, and had it not been for the existence of a private journal which Mallet du Pan kept under the title *Observations historiques sur Paris*<sup>2</sup> from 1785 we should be almost without an indication of his impressions of the condition of the country before the Revolution. Nothing could be more striking than the contrast between the two records. To judge from the *Mercure* the government of France might be

<sup>1</sup> *Mercure*, Nov. 1790.

<sup>2</sup> M. Sayous, vol. i., ch. vi., gives some full extracts from these rough notes which were evidently intended for the writer's own use on some future occasion, and were indeed probably used by him in the work he was engaged on when obliged to fly from Paris in 1792. It was then lost with his other papers, the work, as he says, of half a lifetime. The notebook contains a multitude of political reflections and descriptions of significant incidents, anecdotes of ministers and literary people, and statistical observations; a mass of details of the most vivid interest of which it is, unfortunately, impossible to give anything but the baldest notion in this place.

proceeding in the most orderly and normal fashion ; a glance at the diary reveals the whole story of the vacillation and embarrassment of the royal administration<sup>1</sup> and foreshadows too clearly its approaching dissolution. The born observer reveals himself in these pages with their record of characters and significant incidents, of *bons mots* and manners, of the licence of political comment in the *salons* and in the streets. "Paris," said Mallet, "begins by astonishing, then it amuses, finally it overwhelms one."

Nothing was more characteristic than the attitude of the Government towards the degraded race of so-called men of letters in Paris, a mass of half-educated scribblers turned out by the academies, *musées* and *lycées*, "pernicious establishments which foster the mania for writing". Immense sums were lavished by ministers in pensions and gratuities to servile pamphleteers, the very men who at the outbreak of the Revolution turned round and became Friends of the People and sycophants of the mob, and who, having previously disparaged Mallet du Pan as an unruly republican, then branded him as the slave and pensioner of the court.<sup>2</sup> "A certain number of persons," he notes on one occasion, "most of them flatterers, spies and intriguers,

<sup>1</sup> Described by a wit of the day as "*Corps d'éléphant avec une tête de linotte*".

<sup>2</sup> Obligated to defend himself, he wrote : "Certes on ne m'a trouvé ni sur les livres rouges, ni sur les registres des grâces et pensions. Je n'ai pas même participé à celles qui sont acquittées sur les énormes redevances que payent les journaux politiques ; et je m'en félicite, non par un désintéressement ridicule, mais parce que ayant droit à ces bénéfices, je n'ai à me reprocher ni une lettre, ni une démarche, ni une visite, ni une sollicitation qui ait pu tendre à le rappeler. *Je n'ai rien demandé, rien reçu*" (*Mercur de France*, Nov. 1790).

have just received the *collier de servitude* in the shape of great pensions from M. de Calonne. The literary men of Paris in general are enchanted with these favours, three hundred of them have applied for pensions. *Voilà à quoi on emploie l'argent des peuples !*"

One of them wrote of Louis XVI. and Calonne :—

Digne sang de Henri, puis-je te méconnaître ?  
Que dis-je ? Il vit encore, et Sully va renaître !

"Ce décent Le Brun !" is the comment. "Three months ago he received a pension of two thousand francs. He is not ungrateful !"

Of the two requisites of good government postulated by a wit of the time, that the monarch should have before his eyes the fear of hell, and his ministers that of the freedom of the press, the second can hardly, under such a *régime*, be said to have existed.

Of Calonne, the nominee of Vergennes and D'Artois, the minister who completed the ruin of the finances, who was always ready to defray any extravagance of the Court and the administration, who paid the debts of the Princes and bought Saint-Cloud and Rambouillet for the Queen, and who, shown up and disgraced before the assembly of Notables, reappeared in later days as one of the blind leaders of the blind in the emigration, some curious details are given ; especially as to his expenditure of public money on his mistresses. He is sufficiently described as a man '*qui faisait du plaisir une affaire, et des affaires un plaisir*'. Vergennes fares little better in these pages. He figures indeed in the histories as the last serious statesman of pre-revolutionary France, and his consistent policy of hostility to



England appeals to the patriotism of his countrymen. At the conclusion of the American war he stood out as the greatest and most successful of European foreign ministers. In reality, his policy of encouraging insurrection and sowing discord in foreign States recoiled with disastrous effect on his own country. His ambitious efforts hopelessly embarrassed France financially; he was the opponent of Turgot and he sacrificed Necker to Calonne. Mallet du Pan describes him as the chief author of the actual crisis of affairs. He and Maurepas, virtual Prime Minister during the earlier years of Louis XVI., "have," he says, "been the worthy mentors of the king, they have lulled him into indifference to public business and have multiplied the intrigues of the court *par leur lâcheté à tout laisser faire*". Of Vergennes' private life, his somewhat obscure origin, his disreputable marriage, his incredible meanness in money matters, a deplorable account is given, and he is stated to have died with the largest private fortune amassed in the public service since Mazarin.<sup>1</sup>

The following is his account of a visit to the king's private library at Versailles:—

"*Livres de choix* of various kinds, all magnificently bound and enclosed in glass bookcases. In the supplementary library . . . are the new books. I saw a quantity of English books of travel, history and science, the *English Review*, the *Annual Register*, etc. President Coppay's poor refutation of M. Necker's work is

<sup>1</sup> Marshal de Broglie remarked on this occasion: "Je ne sais comment font aujourd'hui nos ministres. Ils deviennent tous opulents. J'ai vu le Cardinal de Fleury frugal, simple, laissant peu de fortune; Orry n'a pas laissé dix milles livres de rente."

side by side with it. There are collections of the *Gazettes* of Leyden, of Amsterdam, of the Bas Rhin, the *Journal de Paris*, *Affiches*, the *Gazette de France*, and the Statutes at large of the British Parliament for many years. The king reads much, and with the exception of the *Encyclopædia* all the books in his library have been through his hands. He prefers English books to French. He has read through the whole of the great English *Universal History* in a translation."

Some anecdotes of the queen are related which reflect the popular opinion of her. At the Assembly of the Notables she wished to have galleries erected for herself and her ladies. The king refused brusquely, saying: "You are not regent". There are many allusions to the affair of Cardinal de Rohan and to the frivolous amusements and companionships in which the queen indulged; how, for instance, on the evening of an Easter Day on which she had taken the Sacrament she went with her whole *cortège* to the Comtesse de Polignac at Monteuil, the party returning to the public scandal '*dans des brouettes aux flambeaux*'. As an illustration of the familiarity which she allowed to her courtiers, one of them is described as lolling on an ottoman in her presence and beginning a speech, '*Si j'avais l'honneur d'être Louis XVI!*' and the well-known story is quoted of her remark to Madame Victoire '*Ces Parisiens sont indignes*' and of the Princess's rebuke '*Madame, dites indignés!*'

There are curious and terrible details of the treatment of the unhappy persons confined in the prisons and madhouses; there is little evidence of the gaiety and cheerfulness associated with life in Paris at a time of which Talleyrand said, '*Celui qui n'a pas vécu alors, n'a pas connu le plaisir de vivre*'; there is much, on

the contrary, of the spirit of unrest and discontent of the time. The graver comments, indeed, contained in this diary show how fully alive the writer was to the desperate character of the situation, the following for instance :—

‘ Ce qui caractérise la monarchie c’est le relâchement universel. Il n’y a ni règle, ni loi, ni discipline. Avec du crédit, de l’autorité, et de l’argent, tout est impuni ; chacun fait ce qu’il veut. Même esprit dans les mœurs domestiques, femmes, enfants.’

The monarchy was ill served by its agents ; the despatches of the ambassadors were generally very badly drawn up, essential facts being omitted, and sometimes even dates and familiar and proper names mistaken. Ministers were equally incapable. Mdlle de Luxembourg, for instance, observed of a new Minister of Marine : ‘ *Oh je suis sûr qu’il réussira ; c’est le plus charmant médiocrité*’. With this went uncertainty, feebleness, and incapacity in political action. The news one day dictated a line of policy, an incident the next day caused it to be changed. The terrible irony of the whole situation was that reform seemed easily within the grasp of the nation. The Government opposed no obstacle ; the court had made every step in advance, the people none. The assembly of the Notables, the publication of the financial situation, the promise of the power of the purse to the States General had all originated with the court ‘ *par paternité politique fort stupide, par embarras, par ignorance*’. But the people demoralised<sup>1</sup> by a century of despotic maladministration were incapable of

<sup>1</sup> “ En France comme en Russie on permet aux esclaves d’avoir des vices, et on leur donne la licence contre la liberté qu’on leur ôte.”



seizing the opportunity, and Mallet du Pan had early formed the opinion, which events too fully confirmed, that their national character unfitted the French for free institutions.

“They are incapable of cool deliberation, and therefore of free government, in which every man should discuss with weight and moderation . . . they act always from sentiment, never from reflexion. Their vanity, always exercised by the monarchical spirit, would destroy a republic in which the spirit of equality should reign.”

This is not the place in which to follow the increase of the enormous deficit which led directly to the summoning of the States General and the steps by which the reign of Louis XVI. advanced, through a succession of incapable ministers and from one *coup d'État* to another, towards the final crisis. The painful interest of the writer and his absorption in the spectacle which was being unfolded before his eyes become more marked with each succeeding month, and he gives striking pictures of the anarchy and disorder beginning to prevail in the streets. During the autumn of 1788, when Loménie de Brienne was at issue with the *Parlement* and rioting was beginning in Paris, he wrote :—

“The national character and that of Paris is well seen at the present moment. Foolish bluster of all sorts; neither reason, moderation, nor method; rebellion in words, and not a soul who does not stand in awe of a corporal. It enters no one's head to reason on the political consequences of taxation, on the means of recovering some measure of political liberty. It is the taxes themselves, and not the right of levying them, that people think about. They wish for legal

resistance without considering that neither the nation as a whole nor any constituted authority have any political right of opposition, and that one step further will land them in revolt, which, however, they refuse to contemplate."

The spirit described was one which boded ill for the impending task of regeneration and reform. As regards Mallet du Pan himself, enough has been said to show that he at least faced the convulsion which was to bring him fame at the cost of all that makes fame worth having in no mood of levity or partisanship, but, on the contrary, better equipped by study and experience than almost any of his contemporaries. In M. Taine's words:—

"In 1789 Mallet du Pan, at the age of forty, had already passed twenty years in political education. He had, all his life, reflected on affairs of State. From his earliest youth he had deeply studied history, international law, and political economy, not as a mere student or amateur, but as an original thinker and independent critic. Manners, Governments, and Constitutions had been the subject of his close personal observation, for he had lived or travelled in Switzerland, France, Germany, England, and the Low Countries. . . . In the political troubles of his own country, he had been able to gauge the conditions of liberty, its benefits and its dangers; . . . he had been, moreover, not merely a spectator, but an actor. . . . In 1789 he knew, in short, not only France, but Europe."

## CHAPTER IV.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION IN THE PAGES OF THE  
*MERCURE DE FRANCE.*

1789-1792.

THE assembly of the States-General was the signal for an extraordinary outburst of journalistic enterprise. During the previous ten or fifteen years, as we have seen, there had been a literary eruption of no small dimensions, with which the Government had endeavoured to cope partly by proscription and partly by bribes. Then came a flood of pamphlets, '*écrits violents, bizarres, anarchiques*,' in which the questions of the day were feverishly discussed; but the States-General had hardly met before a crowd of new papers appeared as if by enchantment, led by Brissot with his *Patriote Français*, and by Mirabeau with his *États Généraux*, his *Lettres à ses Commettants*, and finally with the famous *Courier de Provence*,—an advance guard which soon forced the barrier of the censorship and established the liberty or licence of the press.

From May 1789 to May 1793, "from the dawn of freedom to the night of the Terror," says Hatın, "no less than one thousand papers or writings in journalistic form saw the light, and it is impossible to exaggerate their influence in spreading the new doctrines throughout the country".



Among this mass of new papers, monthly, weekly and daily, royalist and popular, which proclaimed truth or disseminated poison, the *Mercur*e under Mallet du Pan, described by Mirabeau himself as '*le plus habile et le plus répandu des journaux*,' stands alone and apart, representing with a consistency, courage and force which grew with each month of its three years' existence the opinions of the smallest, the wisest, and the most unpopular of the parties of the Assembly. It was not however till after the fall of the Bastille, when the censorship was formally abolished, that any political comment appeared in its pages. Mallet du Pan was one of the few observers who approached the consideration of the Revolution armed with experience and knowledge but without the prepossession of party or system. One conviction indeed he had formed, a belief in a "mixed" system of government in which monarchy and aristocracy were tempered by popular representation; and it is characteristic that his contribution to the controversies preceding the opening of the States-General was an attempt, by publishing a series of articles on Delolme's account of the British Constitution, to explain and popularise such a system, and to combat the prejudice that liberty was to be found only in pure democracy. His warnings were soon justified. Both in the theory and the practice of parliamentary government France had everything to learn from England. The tedious discussions on the Rights of Man and the constant appeal to the teachings of Rousseau drew from Mallet du Pan a demonstration of the incompatibility of that great writer's ideas with the very existence of the Assembly :—

"The English people," said Rousseau, "think they are free, but they are much mistaken. They are free only during the election of the members of Parliament; once elected they are slaves, they are nothing. The absurd idea of representation is modern, and descends to us from the iniquitous days of feudal government." "Rousseau," adds Mallet, "judged Englishmen slaves because their government is representative; therefore every represented population must likewise be slaves. The authority of Rousseau is thus inadmissible in an assembly of delegates of the people. That celebrated writer persisted to the end of his life in his aversion to representative government, and wrote that he saw no mean between the most austere democracy and the most complete Hobbism."

Mallet du Pan often returned to the political result of Rousseau's doctrine of the *Volonté Générale* on the progress of the Revolution. He showed, for instance (in September 1791), how the attribution of effective sovereignty to the people with constitutional powers dependent solely on their will had produced an irresistible democratic influence side by side with the representative *régime*. He contrasted with this the wisdom of the English principle by which, since the days of the Long Parliament, the sovereignty was held to reside in Parliament consisting of the King and the two Houses, the people retaining only the choice of their representatives. The difference between the two theories was fundamental, as Mallet was never tired of insisting, and by it alone, as he was perhaps the first to perceive, can the course which the Revolution took be explained.

The conduct of business in the Assembly was a point equally inviting appeal to English experience. Mirabeau, scandalised by the anarchy of its proceedings,

had laid on the table a code which had been furnished to him by Romilly embodying the practice of the British Parliament, and Mallet du Pan in the *Mercur* frequently drew attention to such points as the proper function of parliamentary committees, and the authority of the Speaker. What chance such representations had of attention may be gathered from Dumont's observation that when Brissot spoke of the constitution, his constant phrase was '*Voilà ce qui a perdu l'Angleterre!*' and that Sieyès, Duport, Condorcet, Garat and others had exactly the same prejudices against English example. '*Nous ne sommes pas Anglais, et nous n'avons pas besoin des Anglais*' was the feeling of most Frenchmen. Naturally therefore Mallet du Pan was soon out of court as an anglo-maniac. But though he believed with the wisest political heads in France, with Mounier, Malouet, Lally-Tollendal, and Mirabeau himself, that the only hope for the country lay in the endeavour to reconcile representative institutions with a strong<sup>1</sup> monarchy, he was as far as possible from being a doctrinaire. In 1789 he wrote that it would be as foolish to try and grow sugar canes in Siberia as to transplant the British Constitution, the growth of six centuries, to France. He fully recognised, as he said later when accused of fanatical admiration for the British Constitution and the two chamber system, that the materials for a House of Peers did not exist in France, and he only discussed it for an instant on the extinction of the three orders as an alternative to a single chamber. "Whether two chambers, or three, or a hundred, secured the benefits which all France

<sup>1</sup> "The state of France," observed Gouverneur Morris, "requires a *higher-toned* government than that of England."



desired mattered little." Finally he had, as we have seen, been deeply impressed by the levity and ignorance of the people, the outcome of a despotic system, by "the utter prostration of morals," as Gouverneur Morris expressed it, "upon which crumbling matter the great edifice of freedom was to be erected;" and some years later, in his *Considerations*, he stated that long before 1789 he had become convinced that France would be unable to bear political liberty without thirty years of preliminary training.

Such then were the misgivings he entertained, but it is certain that he was surprised and favourably impressed by the energy and seriousness of the *Tiers état*, and by the universal desire for a Constitution. No one, he said, desired in a more ardent and disinterested spirit than himself the success of the noble enterprise in which King and people seemed to be united. Sanguine and enthusiastic he was not, but the rôle of Cassandra was far from being natural or congenial to one of his vigorously combative nature, and it was in no spirit of mere critical aloofness that he prepared to take his share in the work of regeneration the necessity of which no one saw more clearly than himself, or that he witnessed the gradual fulfilment of his forebodings. He set himself at once to take advantage of the enfranchisement of political journalism by organising the *Mercure* on a new basis. Again he described his conception of his duty as historian-journalist or "pioneer historian". Fact disentangled from verbiage was, he thought, what history would one day consult and what the public required, and he disclaimed the pretension of supplying opinions which every citizen should form for himself. He never, indeed, confined

the function of the journalist or the historian to simply recording what he had seen or heard. As time went on and he found he had expected too much of the public, he refrained less and less from the energetic expression of his own opinions; but in the early days his comments were both sparse and brief, and he trusted mainly to the eloquence of the facts, documents and proofs with which he filled his pages. A great feature of the *Mercure*, not found elsewhere, is the attention paid to events and opinions in the provinces where it was very widely circulated. From 1789, says M. Taine who quoted freely from them, some hundreds of letters written on the spot, signed, dated, verified, gave Mallet regular information on the disturbances in the provinces. In 1791 and 1792 there were forwarded to him *résumés* and extracts, reports of the local administrations, manuscript accounts of the various *jacqueries*, details and figures and authentic documents now to be found in the National Archives.

But his analysis of the debates of the two Assemblies upon which the attention of Europe was concentrated for the next three years was the work which gave its celebrity to the *Mercure*, and was the real foundation of its author's reputation. Mallet did not, indeed, give detailed reports on every occasion such as those by which Maret, the future Duc de Bassano, first made a name in the *Moniteur*, nor, on the other hand, fanciful or rhetorical descriptions such as those which Garat confesses to have supplied to the *Journal de Paris*. But he regularly attended the sittings of the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies and composed the analysis of the debates, reporting at length what he thought useful or necessary and in all cases bringing out the salient points of the discussion.

He prided himself, as we know, on the amplitude, the impartiality, and the exactness of this analysis. "It was read throughout Europe," says Lally-Tollendal, "as a model of luminous and impartial discussion." "In it," reports another contemporary, Gentz, the Prussian publicist, "is to be found the character of the Revolution painted in colours more faithful and more living than those employed by any other writer of the time." "He was the only writer," says Sainte-Beuve, "whose analysis of these great debates was free from either insult or flattery." "His reports," says Taine, "are the only ones which are at once truthful and intelligent."

The success of the paper was immediate. It offered, as Chateaubriand has remarked, a singular contrast, that of being violently revolutionary in the literary portion and energetically conservative in the political; but the latter portion was of so much the greater interest that it was not long before it encroached on the space reserved for literature and absorbed half of it.

Much had already happened to fill with sombre anticipations a man of its editor's temper; the disastrous struggle which caused dissension of evil omen for the future and ended in the establishment of the National Assembly, the intrigues of the Queen and the Comte d'Artois which had led to the dismissal of Necker, his triumphant return, and the incidents connected with the fall of the Bastille. By the end of July Gouverneur Morris, the American Minister, whom Taine classes with Rivarol, Malouet and Mallet du Pan as one of the four most competent observers of the Revolution, remarked that France was as near anarchy as a society could be without dissolution, and deplored that the National Assembly had "all that romantic spirit and those ro-



mantic ideas of government which, happily for America, we were cured of before it was too late".

It was not until August, however, that the battle upon which the course of the Revolution turned was seriously joined, and that the great discussion on the reports of the Constitutional Committee brought face to face the champions of constitutional reform on the English pattern and the partisans of more revolutionary measures. At this time the liberal Royalists, Mounier, the proposer of the oath of the tennis court, and his allies Lally-Tollendal, Bergasse, Clermont-Tonnerre, and Virieu were enjoying their short moment of favour in the Assembly, and Malouet, the sanest and most courageous of them all, had endeavoured to organise a moderate party comprising the majority of the Constitutional Committee, two ministers (the Archbishop of Bordeaux and the Comte de Saint-Priest), and a number of moderate members, probably the majority of the whole assembly, headed by the Bishop-Duke of Langres. During August and September this party held its own against the enterprises of the democrats and of the two first orders; for at a time when "concord would have saved them all and France with them" the whole of the nobility and part of the clergy repudiated all association with the moderate reformers. For these two months Mallet du Pan, who saw in their efforts the only hope of safety, supported their cause and supplemented their arguments in the *Mercur*e. But their fate was already sealed when the recommendations of the majority of the Constitutional Committee in favour of the royal veto, of the double chamber system, and of the power of dissolution by the King were rejected in favour of a Declaration of Rights on the American

model, with its various articles including the suspensive veto, the single chamber, and the permanence of the Assembly. The scheme which had, in accordance with the demand of the great majority of the *cahiers*, been elaborated by the most capable and experienced political students in France was never even discussed as a whole, and Mallet du Pan vigorously condemned the conduct of an Assembly which singled out one or two leading points, and by rejecting them destroyed the cohesion of the various parts without which a "constitution would be a monstrosity". The power of the veto was at once seen to be fundamental, and Mallet was not exaggerating when he wrote before its discussion: "It is impossible to regard without terror the questions raised this week in the Assembly, upon the decision of which will probably depend the tendency of the new legislation, the confirmation or the loss of liberty, public security within and without, and the authority necessary to a great monarchy". The inactivity and moral cowardice of some, and the calculated opposition of others of the royalist majority, who imagined that the very extravagance of the innovations would work its own cure and bring about a restoration of the old order, and who, by their dishonest action in their alliance with the revolutionary party, set an example only too faithfully followed by the extreme right all through subsequent French history; finally the feeble and opportunist support by Necker of the suspensive veto, decided the issue; and with the veto the rest of the constitutional proposals fell to the ground. One last chance remained, and on the 29th September Malouet, the Bishop of Langres and Redon were deputed by a large number of deputies to endeavour to persuade the King to re-

move with the majority of the Assembly to some place such as Soissons or Compiègne at a distance from Paris; the first of many such proposals which might have saved the monarchy, but the execution of which became increasingly difficult and the success more problematical. They repaired to Versailles, and Montmorin and Necker pressed the proposal upon the King who, fatigued with a day's hunting, went to sleep during the council and only awoke to put an end to the discussions with a simple '*Non !*'<sup>1</sup> The popular party, alarmed at the action of the moderates who had been at too little pains to conciliate them, retaliated by the outrages of the days of October and the removal of the Court and the Assembly to Paris. Mounier, who had narrowly escaped with his life, Lally-Tollendal, and the Bishop of Langres were the most distinguished of some twenty members of the party who completed its discomfiture by their resignation and flight. "Paris," wrote Mallet, "would have stoned them, history will avenge them!"

Speculation has exhausted itself over the question whether Mirabeau's last desperate plan of counter-revolution might or might not have saved France and Europe from the reign of Terror. Surely here, in the earlier and worthier period of the Revolution, is a far more inviting subject for conjectural history, if only because the very possible success of the early Constitutionalists, whom a superficial judgment dismisses as almost unworthy of notice, as a set of pedants and anglo-maniacs, would certainly have prevented the whole series of catastrophes which culminated in

<sup>1</sup> The story is given in the memoirs both of Malouet and Mallet du Pan.



foreign and civil war. The party of liberal reform is perhaps the only one during the whole course of the Revolution which deserved the description of statesmanlike, for of this party alone can it be said that reform upon the principles advocated by its members might have averted revolution by founding a strong and durable polity. Fail, indeed, they did, but failure they shared with every other party which survived and succeeded them. And it is a hard fate which caused them not only to be hated at the time for their moderation and foresight both by Royalists and by Republicans, but to lose the place in history which the fascination of horror has obtained for factions even more fleeting than themselves.

To enter into the causes of their failure would be beyond the province of this volume; for it would be to discuss the course of the Revolution itself.<sup>1</sup> But both Mallet du Pan and Malouet dwelt on one or two reasons which go far to explain the ineffectiveness of the action of this great parliamentary party. One was the timidity and want of moral courage among Frenchmen of all classes and parties which is perhaps the most striking characteristic of the revolutionary era, and which is inexplicable until the paralysing effect of the collapse of all lawful authority among a people

<sup>1</sup> The suddenness of the collapse of the monarchy shows how true was the insight which led Mallet du Pan to say, in speaking of the various causes assigned for the French Revolution, the quarrel of the Parliaments, the Assembly of the Notables, the deficit, the ministry of Necker, the assaults of philosophy: "None of these things would have happened under a monarchy which was not rotten at the core." The moment, in fact, had arrived, inevitable in every despotism, when an incapable ruler was called upon to grapple with a demoralised administration.

demoralised by despotism is appreciated. The reign of Terror began in men's minds with the fall of the Bastille. The '*Tais-toi mauvais citoyen!*' roared at Malouet in the Assembly struck the keynote of alarm which enfeebled the moderate parties; it showed itself also among the Parisians afraid of the court and the army, among the country people afraid of brigandage, among quiet citizens everywhere afraid of violence, and its most fatal fruit was the emigration of the natural leaders of society throughout France, which Mallet from the outset stigmatised as an unfortunate political blunder. Hardly less significant was the inexperience in the working of parliamentary institutions already referred to. Such institutions depend for success on the nicest balance of forces, and on moral and traditional qualities only to be acquired by generations of practice; on ideas of party cohesion totally wanting in an assembly of men, thrown together without previous acquaintance with each other, divided by class prejudices and by fundamental differences of opinion, and totally devoid of that wholesome indifference to logic and consistency characteristic of English politicians. Malouet reproached himself, and his words threw a flood of light not only on the history of the Constituent Assembly but on all subsequent parliamentary history in France,<sup>1</sup> for the exclusiveness which

<sup>1</sup> "Je ne veux pas dissimuler ici combien cette faute de ma part (his break with Mirabeau) est inexcusable, ainsi que celle que j'ai commise pendant toute la durée de notre Assemblée, de rompre ou d'éviter toute communication avec plusieurs membres influents du parti populaire, que j'ai reconnus dans plusieurs circonstances beaucoup plus sages que les opinions auxquelles il se laissaient entraîner" (*Mémoires de Malouet*, i., 281).

had kept him apart from many with whom he might have acted for the common advantage. The process of disintegration could only have been checked by some commanding personality, but of real leadership there was none.

Mirabeau alone could have led the party, but Mirabeau was impossible. The greatest figure of the Revolution except Bonaparte, he united genius and patriotism with degrading faults of character. His own cry of regret, perhaps the most pathetic ever uttered by a public man, is the explanation of the contradiction of his life—'*Combien l'immoralité de ma jeunesse fait de tort à la chose publique*'. The invincible repugnance of the world was shown by the fact, noted by Morris, that he was received with hisses at the opening of the States-General. His past made him enter on the great struggle not as a philosopher or a statesman, but as a malcontent and a *déclassé*. His pecuniary embarrassments destroyed his personal independence and sold him, in the words of his enemies, to the Court. His personal ambition, his want of temper, his necessity for self-assertion, his "insatiate thirst for applause," led the great orator to endeavour to maintain his ascendancy by thundering against the enemies of the Revolution and inflaming popular passion, while he was secretly working for the cause of the monarchy. And not in secret only. He clearly saw that the annihilation of the executive power, the paralysis of administration, would deliver over his country to the violence of foreign enemies and to the worse misfortune of anarchy at home. He turned to the monarchy as the only anchor of safety. He considered that to restore to the king power at



least equal to that nominally exercised by the King of England was the only way to avert disaster. His opposition to the declaration of rights, his abstention from the work of the abolition of feudalism on the day of the 4th of August, his contention for investing the King with the right of peace and war, and with an absolute veto without which he would "rather live in Constantinople than in Paris"; above all, his effort to induce the Assembly to give a seat in their body to the ministers of the Crown, the constitutional pivot on which the fortunes of the Revolution may be said to have turned; these were all public actions which might have won for him, not only the confidence of the King and Queen, but also the support of moderate men of all parties. In such a union, under such leadership, lay the only hope, and with the presumption of genius he felt and proclaimed that he was the only man who could reconcile the monarchy with freedom. Yet Morris only echoed the sentiment of the best men of his time when he said, "that there were in the world men who were to be employed but not trusted," "that virtue must ever be sullied by an alliance with vice," "that Mirabeau was the most unprincipled scoundrel that ever lived".

I have dwelt at some length on the efforts and plans, the hopes and the failures of the liberal royalist party, because Mallet du Pan's adherence to it is the keynote of his political action from first to last. Almost at once it threw him athwart the main current of the Revolution, and made him the mark of persecution at the hands, not only of the advanced factions, but of the pure Royalists with whom his relations were of the most uneasy description all through his career. For

the moment, however, it was the popular party who attacked him.

“It was no doubt,” writes his son, “a great relief to be freed from the galling yoke of the censorship; but although the tribunal of opinion which succeeded did not exercise its control either in a manner so puerile or so direct, it was not less despotic; and in some respects much more fearful. Public opinion had become all in all; and it did not bear sway with a gentle hand. The popular party, who then prevailed, were in the greatest degree impatient of contradiction, and even discussion, in matters of government; and my father, not being disposed to run along with the full tide that was setting in, soon became an object of active suspicion, and was denounced in the clubs as an aristocrat, and a friend of the old *Régime*. On the other hand, the moderate party in the Assembly eagerly availed themselves of the influence of a publication conducted by a man of talent and independence, and of which the circulation was more extensive than that of almost any other political work, upwards of 12,000 copies of the political part of the *Mercure*, consisting of three and a half sheets, being sold weekly. The court and the ministers likewise caused frequent communications to be made to my father, through persons attached to them, with a view of correcting erroneous opinions and misstatements of facts, proceeding from the Tribune, the clubs or the press. Numberless letters were addressed to him from the provinces, either with a view to publication or from individuals menaced and oppressed by the popular party, who requested him to vindicate their conduct, and solicited his opinion as to the course they were to pursue. Among these were many nobles, who asked his advice as to the expediency of emigrating.”

Room may here be found for some further recollec-

tions of Mallet's son, who had returned in August, 1789, from his school in England, and has recorded his impressions of the time, the impressions of a boy of fourteen.

"I remained the ensuing autumn and winter with my family; and soon after my arrival went to see the remains of the Bastille, then crowded from morning to night with visitors, exulting over its ruins. I also well remember the 5th of October and the scenes that ensued; the crowds of people returning from Versailles in a state of frightful excitement; the Poissardes parading the streets in their red cottons and white caps, with large nosegays in their breasts, asking money at all the respectable houses with an air and tone that would have made it very unsafe to hesitate in complying with their demands. I also remember the *queues*, as they were called, at the bakers' shops. For although the French Government makes it a special object of administration, in times of scarcity, to provide at any cost for the supply of Paris, the bakers' shops are fearfully crowded, and the deliveries of bread a long and tedious process. These shops, be it observed, are all protected by heavy iron bars in front. As early as three o'clock in the morning people began to secure their places, and the crowds gradually increased till the street in front of the shop was filled. Then the pushing and scrambling and screaming when the loaves came out was truly frightful; and this every day!"

The following passages give us almost the only glimpse into the actual life of the writer during these stirring times which we possess:—

"An Italian Opera had been established at Paris in a small theatre not far from our home where the agreeable compositions of Paesiello and Cimarosa were heard in great perfection. It was seldom crowded, and my father, who delighted in Italian music and found it a more complete relief from his occupations than either



society or the play, often went there, and not unfrequently took us with him.

. . . . .

“Mounier, Malouet, Clermont-Tonnerre, the minister Montmorin, and Vicq d’Azyr, the Queen’s physician, were some of the principal persons with whom my father was in habitual communication at Paris, and I had acquired enough of English sentiments and opinions to attend with great eagerness and interest to the animated discussions which took place at our house. After the removal of the Assembly to Paris, the deputies with whom he was acquainted often came late in the evening to talk over the day’s debate; and the apartment in which I slept having a door opening into the drawing-room, I was allowed as a great favour to keep it ajar, and used to sit up in bed till a very late hour, with my ears stretched to the utmost, catching what I could of the animated conversation in the drawing-room. I remember on one occasion Malouet coming in very much agitated: he had been assailed and insulted by the populace, in consequence of some opinion he had expressed and had exhibited a pair of pistols which he always carried in his waistcoat pockets. The government of Paris, and indeed of the whole country, had not then been transferred to the sections and the clubs; and I did not therefore witness any of those visits to which my father was frequently subjected at a later period from the patriots, who figured in the scenes of the 10th of August and the 2nd of September, 1792.”<sup>1</sup>

During the discussions on the veto, however, four ruffians had called on Mallet du Pan threatening him with their pistols and telling him that he should answer with his life for anything he wrote in support of Mounier’s opinions. His answer had been an

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*

article again vigorously defending these conclusions. Fresh denunciations and visits followed upon the faithful account which he alone had ventured to give of the outrages of the 5th and 6th of October. But he never until a much later date mentioned these occurrences in the *Mercure*, though he signalised the growing spirit of persecution by the phrase: "It is with sword or rope in hand that public opinion now issues its decrees. Believe or Perish, is the anathema pronounced by the enthusiasts, pronounced in the name of freedom".

The flight of Mounier, Lally-Tollendal and others of the liberal royalist party after the days of October, though explicable enough without an imputation of personal cowardice, was none the less the mistake which parliamentary secessions have usually been found to be. It merely weakened the moderate opposition, without rallying public opinion as the retirement of the whole royalist majority of the Assembly might conceivably have done. "MM. de Clermont-Tonnerre,<sup>1</sup> Mallet du Pan and I," writes Malouet, "alone remained *en évidence*," and upon Malouet in the Assembly, as upon Mallet in the press, fell the labour of representing the opinions of those deputies who continued to steer a steady course between revolutionary excess and royalist exaggeration, and who had hoped for the establishment of a well-balanced constitutional monarchy.

The break-up of the liberal royalist party and the growing cleavage of opinion had now, however, transferred to more extreme hands the real leadership of the opposition to revolutionary ideas and methods, and during the next eighteen months two clearly defined

<sup>1</sup> Comte de Clermont Tonnerre, assassinated on the 10th of August 1792.

parties played a considerable part in the Assembly, that of the Left, not yet educated up to the level of the extremists, led by Duport, Charles de Lameth and Barnave, the latter one of the most interesting and attractive figures of the early Revolution ;<sup>1</sup> and the Right led by three remarkable orators. One of these was the Abbé Maury, the shoemaker's son, whose eloquence had already won him a seat in the Academy ; whose splendid defence of the clergy against Talleyrand was to gain for him in 1794 the great object of his wishes, the cardinal's hat ; whose restless ambition was to lead him first to abandon the royalist cause for Napoleon, and then to abandon Napoleon only to find a miserable end in the papal prisons in 1817. He had courage, physical vigour, and a talent for improvisation so remarkable as to make him a serious rival to Mirabeau himself, but he never succeeded in inspiring a belief in his sincerity equal to the gratitude evoked for his real services. Cazalès, a young officer despised by the nobles for the insignificance of his family, was eloquent but indolent, and the Comte de Montlosier,<sup>2</sup> one of Mallet's most constant friends, was a man of great ability and of elevated character, but of a somewhat mystic turn of mind, and well described as one '*qui aimait la sagesse*

<sup>1</sup> Mallet du Pan tells how at the meeting of the States General Barnave sought out Gouverneur Morris at a club and descanted to him for an hour on liberty, and ended by asking him what he thought of these principles. " ' Je pense, Monsieur,' répondit froidement Mr. Morris, ' que vous êtes beaucoup plus républicain que moi.' "

<sup>2</sup> He is remembered for his magnificent apostrophe to the assailants of the bishops. " Vous les chasserez de leurs palais, ils se réfugieront dans les chaumières ; vous les ôterez leurs croix d'or, ils en prendront une de bois ; et souvenez-vous que c'est une croix de bois qui a sauvé le monde ! "



*avec folie et la modération avec transport*'. None of these, however, even with the assistance of Malouet, more of an official and administrator than a parliamentary statesman, were the men to lead a successful conservative resistance, though they had the melancholy satisfaction of seeing many of those who successively occupied the position of public favourites recognise their wisdom and endeavour too late to follow in their footsteps.

Though supporting in most cases these royalist leaders in the Assembly, it was with Malouet that Mallet du Pan formed the closest ties of personal and political friendship and sympathy. Driven more and more into the position of simple defenders of the monarchy,<sup>1</sup> it was not until after the ruin of their cause in France and the execution of Louis XVI., for whom they both felt strong personal loyalty and who himself sympathised with their political attitude, that they recovered their full freedom of action and found occasion, as we shall see, to insist afresh on the necessity for liberalising monarchical ideas.

Meanwhile Mallet du Pan maintained a tone of studied moderation and restraint in his comments. He loyally accepted as the decision of the nation the defeat of the constitutional principles which he had advocated. "The principles of the Revolution," he

<sup>1</sup> On this as on so many points Gouverneur Morris expressed the same idea as Mallet and almost in the same words: "A Republican and first as it were emerged from that Assembly which has formed one of the most republican of all republican institutions I preach incessantly respect for the Prince, attention to the rights of the nobility, and moderation not only in the object but also in the pursuit of it". Morris, it will be remembered, was one of the distinguished men who framed the Constitution of the United States.

wrote in December 1789,<sup>1</sup> "have become the law of the land. They were imperiously demanded by the abuses of every kind under which France had groaned since the reign of Louis XIV. To attempt to oppose the new order of government by schemes of active resistance, by chimerical ideas of counter-revolution, would be an act of madness." He advocated the taking of the oath to the constitution—the *serment civique*—on the ground that no individual had the right to oppose his own will to that of the Assembly legally declared with the sanction of the King; and he remarked on the danger, "in our present terrible situation," of giving any pretext for excess or persecution by the least violation of the law. Such sentiments as these were highly distasteful to the champions of the old *régime*,<sup>2</sup> while the popular party could not forgive Mallet's efforts to shake their complacency or disturb their optimism by his too faithful accounts of intolerance in the Assembly and of growing anarchy in the country. He was thus exposed to violent and scur-

<sup>1</sup> *Mercur*e, 2nd January 1790.

<sup>2</sup> Their newspapers conducted an opposition of ridicule and epigram, rather than of serious criticism. The *Ami du Roi*, *Petit Gaultier*, *Actes des Apôtres*, were often, as has been said, unreadable from their obscenity when not from their dulness. Their chief contributors were Peltier a mere mercenary, and Rivarol, Champcemetz and Mirabeau-Tonneau: Bergasse, Laraguais and Montlosier contributed serious articles to the *Actes des Apôtres*. Mallet du Pan's notion of the dignity of journalism differed considerably from that of these Royalist and Revolutionary *francs-tireurs*. "*La meilleure sauvegarde de la liberté de la presse, le plus efficace préservatif de son dérèglement, c'est la morale des auteurs, non celle dont on parle ou qu'on imprime, mais celle que l'on pratique; le respect religieux de la liberté, l'honneur, l'habitude de la décence, et cette terreur utile qui devoit saisir tout homme de bien lorsque sa plume va afficher une accusation ou répandre un système.*"

rilous attacks from both the parties which for different reasons were interested in perpetuating the anarchy of so-called popular rule. This double resentment he steadily faced, maintaining on the one hand that the exaggeration of democratic principles was turning into a simulacrum the throne which alone could maintain a great empire in freedom, peace and order, and on the other that a return to absolute monarchy would only end by replunging the country into its actual condition, a condition into which it was the most terrible reproach against the monarchy to have brought France.

"No one," he asserted, "had had more reason to welcome the advent of liberty than one brought up in its teachings, who had all his life detested absolute monarchy. But to love liberty a man must have enjoyed it, to recognise it amid the artifices of ambition and the illusions of theory he must have witnessed its excesses as well as its benefits, to discern its limits he must have learnt by experience the dangers into which a state, imprudent enough to force the barriers which law, justice and wisdom interpose between the power of a people and its obedience, may run." He therefore declined to drift with the popular current, observing 'Ce n'est pas à quarante ans qu'un républicain sage, qui en a traîné vingt dans les tempêtes politiques, se rendra le complice des fureurs de qui que ce soit'.<sup>1</sup>

He persisted on the contrary in his *tâche accablante*, that of publishing the debates at which he assisted and the facts which reached him and which he carefully verified, and of so endeavouring to create a public conscience as to the "cowardly war" which was being

<sup>1</sup> *Mercur*, 23rd January 1790.



waged on persons and property. His reward was to see himself daily misrepresented and defamed, while the most criminal papers remained unpunished. "While they are permitted to preach, I may not denounce murder and incendiarism."<sup>1</sup>

"In the spring of 1790," writes his son,<sup>2</sup> "my father made arrangements to quit Paris for a short time, and took me to Geneva, where he had determined to place me in the business of his only brother, my uncle Mallet. He was received on that occasion by the most distinguished of his countrymen in a very flattering manner, which strongly marked the opinion they held of his talents and independence as a public writer."

On his return two months later he gave in the *Mercur* (10th July 1790) the long-promised *résumé* of the year, which he had constantly delayed in the hope that the Revolution might have run its course. "Instead of this," he writes, "we are still suspended between anarchy and liberty." His observations show that by this time he clearly understood the character of the Revolution. He recognised that he was the witness of one of those periodical upheavals in which the same causes reproduce from time to time the same vicissitudes, '*triste consolation qui reste seule à une génération souffrante*'. As a distinction, however, he remarked that unlike previous political subversions of which the mass of the people had been the victims and not the agents, the present convulsion reached down to the very roots of society, which had been swept from its foundations and which it only now remained to attempt to reconstruct.

<sup>1</sup> *Mercur*, April 1790.

<sup>2</sup> *Reminiscences*.

And in what circumstances, he asked, was the attempt to be made? "Among a people corrupted by the mean vices engendered by despotism, amid an excessive inequality of fortune and still more of education and talent, with books which substituted enthusiasm for reflection, amid a chaos of morals, rights and systems!"

A month later occurs a passage which shows at its best the writer's instinctive prescience of coming events. The foreign war which was to prove the final solvent of the French polity was already casting its shadow before, and already Mallet du Pan combats its approach. A debate in the Assembly had revealed a deep-seated suspicion that the powers of Europe were plotting a counter-revolution. After some remarks, of which the history of popular government too fully confirms the truth, on the danger of treating foreign affairs in public and on the manner in which suspicion itself creates the reality of peril, he stated his opinion that to imagine a crusade of foreign powers against the existing constitution was to look for trouble in the wrong direction.

"The conspirators to be feared," he wrote, "are those who by threatening Europe may actually rouse her; they are the preachers of insurrection, the scribblers who insult every sovereign, the clubs who teach the art of anarchy and public calamity scattering their agents through every empire to stir up trouble, murder and civil war in the name of philosophy, the incendiary sophists who incite the people to destroy all authority, to punish the sovereign, and to place despotic power in the hands of the multitude. . . . Such are the projects which will force sovereigns into action to prevent the ruin of their states; such are the only reasons for alarm."

The resignation in October of the once idolised Necker, the man to whose lot it had fallen to initiate the revolution, whose duty it was to guide it, was received with general indifference. Mallet refused to associate himself with the violent strictures of Cazalès on the fallen ministry. '*On ne viole pas les tombeaux*' he wrote, and he proceeded to trace the self-effacement of the ministry to the powerlessness to which the royal authority had been reduced by the constitution, and to argue that it was unjust to reproach Necker for not leading an Assembly which refused to be led, which at every turn insisted in giving lessons to its instructor. The finances could not be re-established when anarchy was universal and authority non-existent, without credit, taxes, or public confidence. But although it was "as unjust to accuse him of the ruin of the finances as of the loss of the battle of Ramillies," Necker undoubtedly showed himself, as Morris observed, a very poor financier with his hocus pocus of borrowing from the *caisse d'escompte*, his farce of the "patriotic contribution," his feeble handling of the question of the *assignats*. Mallet du Pan admitted that "he had innocently provoked almost all the misfortunes he deplored," that he was the "constant victim of illusion," that he was "as inferior to circumstances as he was irreproachable in his intentions"; and he remarked on the curious fatality that the only occasion on which his advice had been followed was when he had declared against the royal veto, although convinced by Mounier's arguments. One of his earliest and most fatal mistakes had been his haughty reception of Mirabeau at the meeting which Malouet had arranged between them. Necker had a habit of tilting his head



upwards and fixing his eyes on the ceiling in moments of special embarrassment, so that the angle at which he held his head was considered a thermometer of the political situation. It was in this attitude that he received the suggestion that he should meet Mirabeau, and when Mirabeau arrived he coldly asked him what proposals he had to make. Mirabeau, scenting insult, replied, "My proposal is to wish you Good morning," and left the room; and going up to Malouet in the Assembly angrily ejaculated, '*Votre homme est un sot, il aura de mes nouvelles!*' He faithfully kept his promise, and during the months in which Necker lingered ineffectively and disastrously on the political scene, had no words strong enough to express his contempt for him as a minister and a financier.

If Mallet du Pan was too indulgent in his estimate of Necker,<sup>1</sup> he must certainly be considered to have been harsh and impolitic in his judgment of Mirabeau. His treatment indeed of this great man and of the only two other men of genius, Danton and Bonaparte, produced by the tremendous upheaval of the revolutionary era, illustrates the limitation of a contemporary historian, limitations of which he showed himself conscious when he said '*Rarement voit-on juste les objets pendant l'orage*'. His criticism of Bonaparte, whose mission, that of evolving order out of chaos, he at least discerned, we shall notice in its place. In Danton, of the three the least entitled to the praise of statesmanship, destroyer of the old order and creator of an executive in its place which in the hands of others brought about

<sup>1</sup> Lady Blennerhassett, however, seems to reckon him among Necker's severest critics. He certainly never utters an appreciative, hardly a civil, word of Madame de Staël.

the end of civil government in the awful supremacy of the guillotine, Mallet du Pan excusably beheld only one of the most ruthless and unscrupulous enemies of European social order; but it is impossible to acquit him of blindness to Mirabeau's immense superiority among his contemporaries as a champion of the ideas which he himself had most at heart. It would be difficult to point out in the pages of the *Mercur* any expression of sympathy with Mirabeau's objects, still less with his methods. Even the words in which he records his death are studiously cold: "It is no ordinary man whose memory thus excites a storm of contrary opinions and the regrets, not only of his adherents, but also of a portion of the minority who founded their hopes on the secret views of the great party leader." It is unnecessary to seek for the private reasons which as we know Mallet du Pan had like so many others for distrusting Mirabeau. Even Malouet, who from the first appreciated his political genius, never brought himself until the closing scenes to co-operate with him, though he bitterly reproached himself in later days for breaking off his intercourse with him after the failure of his first advances. Mallet du Pan was of a more uncompromising temper, and he made no attempt to overcome the repugnance which Mirabeau's character excited in him. Distinctions between the '*grande*' and the '*petite morale*,' between public and private conduct, only aroused his contempt, and he was too straightforward to be able to make allowances for the ambiguities which appeared in Mirabeau's political conduct. For the great orator never ceased to pursue two incompatible aims, the desire for ministerial place and the love of popularity. Mallet du Pan though, as

we know from his private journal, he was aware of Mirabeau's later advances to the Court, was of course not acquainted with the masterly series of Notes published a generation later in the correspondence with the Comte de la Marck upon which his real title to statesmanship depends. It was therefore chiefly from Mirabeau's conduct in the Assembly, his democratic violence of manner, and his constant appeal to revolutionary passions, that Mallet who watched and followed the debates had to judge of his wisdom as a leader.

As the leading member of the diplomatic Committee and virtual Foreign Minister from July 1790 till his death, Mirabeau's conduct was marked by real wisdom, as, for instance, in the debate (August 25th 1790) on the observance of the treaty obligations incurred by the family compact with Spain, which he carried against the more violent party in the Assembly. Yet his wisdom was, as Mallet notes, disguised by '*tirades pour la Galerie*' about "liberty realising the dreams of philosophy and proclaiming universal peace" which were hardly convincing to sober minds. Another comment shows how greatly Mirabeau did himself injustice and damaged his credit among thinking men by the extravagance of style which he thought necessary to maintain his ascendancy. It was on the proposal the following day (August 26th) to issue two milliards of fresh *assignats*<sup>1</sup> that Mallet wrote: '*Il est impossible de prêcher avec plus de véhémence et moins de*

<sup>1</sup> Mallet du Pan knew how systems of currency depend on confidence. "S'il y a de doute sur le succès des assignats, la cause des assignats est perdue. Il n'est pas permis de hasarder le sort de ses concitoyens, et le devoir des législateurs est de prendre le moyen le plus sûr."



*réflexion le projet le plus injuste . . . le plus affreux dans ses effets*'. As events turned out Mallet's fears were justified, yet we know from Mirabeau's twenty-first letter to the Court how clearly he recognised the dangers of the measures which he advocated as necessary to avert imminent bankruptcy, and how inevitable he thought its failure would be were Necker retained in office. His advice was taken and Necker dismissed ; but Mirabeau could not even if he had been invested with the authority of a minister have directed the financial administration together with foreign policy, and the desperate expedient, carried out without the safeguards which alone could have given it a chance of success, failed like all else to stem the tide of revolutionary ruin. One more instance is worth giving to show how difficult Mirabeau made it for moderate men to work with him. On the 21st of October 1790 he combated in a speech of the most sanguinary violence a motion by M. de Foucault in favour of the old flag of the French monarchy. '*Le cœur très froid et l'œil incendié,*' reports Mallet, he mounted the tribune from which he pronounced with studied ferocity a speech "which might well have been delivered *le poignard à la main,*" and which excited the most frantic applause from the galleries of the Assembly.

It was indeed not until within six weeks of his death that Mirabeau made his final choice between the opposing rôles of tribune of the people and servant of the King. It was during a discussion on one of the proposals to forbid emigration and confiscate the property of *émigrés*, which Mallet compared with Nero's order to close the gates of Rome before setting fire to it, that Mirabeau declared that he should

consider himself "released from every oath of fidelity to the authors of so infamous a declaration"; and that when interrupted he thundered forth the retort '*Silence aux trente Voix!*' A year later when the galleries had usurped the prerogatives of the representatives of the nation, when three or four hundred hirelings without standing or political existence were disposing of the destiny of twenty-five millions of people and hounding the country into war, Mallet du Pan pointed out how the phalanxes with which the "virtuous" Mirabeau had maintained his ascendancy were now the oppressors of his old associates in the Assembly, "the very men who had deified him". If Mirabeau had lived to carry out his plan for a counter-revolution, he could only have succeeded by provoking civil war. This he had no doubt decided to do; but what was the real chance that, with the half support which was all the Queen and the Court ever gave to those who would have saved them, he could have welded together the conservative elements remaining in France; that he could have secured the adherence of the provinces, where the great mass of public opinion was, down to the close of the year 1791 as Mallet du Pan acknowledged, under the spell of the Revolution and its most advanced leaders; that civil war would have forestalled and averted the foreign war, which was to cause the triumph of the Jacobins? Mallet du Pan at all events did not believe, any more than La Marck, in the success of the great scheme of which he had been kept informed, and writing many years later he expressed the opinion that Mirabeau's death had saved him from a more tragic end; and that in all probability, discredited by his apostasy, he would have served as a fresh example

of the ruin which overtakes those who, in a popular revolution, draw back from the paths of unreason, perversity and violence. Whatever the arguments may be in favour of the possibility of Mirabeau's plan, upon which, sullied though it was by financial obligations to the Court, much of his fame as a statesman must rest, they apply with tenfold force to the efforts of the liberal Monarchists of 1789 to guide the Revolution into a channel of safety. His return upon himself is a signal justification of the foresight and wisdom of their views.

Every month meanwhile made free speech more difficult and dangerous. Classed as an aristocrat Mallet du Pan had long been the object of atrocious calumnies, to which his only answer had been to continue his work in the lines he had traced out for himself. On the 27th of November 1790 he was at last moved by a more alarming incident than usual to give an account of the various measures of proscription of which he had been the victim. A few days before, a mob, excited by harangues and writings which designated him as a supporter of despotism, gathered in front of his house and threatened to treat it like the Hôtel de Castries. This danger passed, but ten days later a deputation of fourteen or fifteen men from the patriotic societies of the Palais Royal presented themselves in the courtyard of his house and ordered him to cease his attacks on the constitution. A quarter of an hour of most curious discussion followed. Mallet challenged them to point to a single passage in the *Mercure* in which he had defended the ancient *régime*, he strongly vindicated his own opinions, and told the deputation that he had not come to France to take



lessons in liberty. He assured them that they might burn his house or drag him to the scaffold, but that they should never induce him to apostatize as they urged him to do and write in favour of the dominant opinions. They retired apparently impressed by his arguments and his courage; he, on his side, testifying that they could not have executed their odious mission with greater propriety of demeanour. In telling the story he took occasion to state in a more complete fashion than he had hitherto done his own personal attitude towards the Revolution, to affirm his approval of a movement which had substituted for an absolute monarchy gangrened with abuses, a regular and legal government of which the King had laid the foundations; his stern condemnation of the anarchy which would before long turn the sovereignty of the people into an unlimited despotism; his admiration for the principles of the British Constitution, the only principles applicable to a great state in which monarchy must be preserved, principles which alone could reconcile the rights of liberty with those of authority; finally his haughty repudiation of the accusation that he had been bribed to support the cause of royalty.

Shortly afterwards<sup>1</sup> Mallet, a Protestant, gave fresh proof of his intrepidity and of his independence by an article condemning the treatment of the French clergy. It had been decreed in November 1790 that all bishops and *curés* who did not take the oath of fidelity to the new civil constitution of the Church should be dismissed, and the result was the schism which so greatly aggravated the political difficulties of France. Opinions,

<sup>1</sup> *Mercur*, 15th January and 23rd April 1791.

observed Mallet, would always be divided as to the necessity of the sweeping reform which had been operated in the Church in France, but what posterity would indignantly condemn was the pitiless persecution to which its members were now being subjected; the insults to which they were daily exposed from the fury and intolerance of the public. '*Il manquait un phénomène à notre siècle, celui de l'athéisme persécuteur.*' More than once he returned to the subject<sup>1</sup> and pointed out the disastrous mistake made by the Assembly in refusing the co-operation of the clergy which would have been willingly given in the work of reform, and in driving them to choose between their duty to their conscience and their duty to the state.

The treatment of the clergy was only one form of the intolerance, "that incurable leprosy of the human heart," which was showing itself in so many ways in the Assembly, in the press, and in the theatres.<sup>2</sup> The monstrous inquisition into opinions, and the trade of the informer "so honoured by Sylla, Tiberius, Sejanus, Louis XI., the Long Parliament and our own *Comité*

<sup>1</sup>For instance in the *Mercur*e of 10th September 1791. "Quelques Ecclésiastiques scandaleux, quelques Abbés dissipateurs, quelques Curés tracassiers, n'empêcheraient pas la grande pluralité des pasteurs, à commencer par les Prélats, d'être aux yeux du peuple des magistrats de morale, des censeurs respectables, des sollicitateurs de charités, des hommes dévoués par état, par conscience, par habitude, par intérêt même, à secourir journellement l'indigence et le malheur. Quiconque a présenté le Clergé de France en général sous des couleurs différentes, a été le plus criminel des calomniateurs; car il a détruit pour jamais l'empire inestimable de la bienfaisance inspirée par la Religion."

<sup>2</sup>"Les spectacles deviennent aujourd'hui inabordables . . . nul n'est assuré en y entrant d'en sortir sain et sauf" (*Mercur*e).

*des Recherches*," became a constant theme of melancholy and sarcastic comment. But increasing danger only stimulated the editor of the *Mercur*e to speak out with greater freedom, and to insist that the employment of force against opinion, of violence to stifle contradiction, was the most signal proof of moral weakness. Although, as he said, it was no longer permitted to speak of the legislature save in the language reserved for absolute sovereigns, he never relaxed his analysis of the debates which became more and more caustic and trenchant, until with the Legislative Assembly it came to resemble a continuous satire of the proceedings.<sup>1</sup> It was treason to allude to the thorn in freedom's bed of roses, but Mallet continued his weekly record of crimes perpetrated in her name, a record of which Taine and other writers have made ample use. The recital, unwelcome to many, and tedious as it appears to most readers at this distance of time, was yet it must be remembered an essential part of the work of a contemporary historian anxiously striving to collect evidence as to the course of events, to arouse the conscience of the people against excesses, and to preserve, if it was still possible, what was useful and beneficial in the Revolution. The task indeed seemed hopeless enough :—

"The tragedies," he wrote in March 1791, "which have become the history of every day from every canton

<sup>1</sup> Without however, observed Gentz, losing its truthfulness, as a comparison with the reports of the *Moniteur*, the *Logographe* and other papers, shows. "Mallet du Pan," he wrote, "a peint avec fidélité le côté tragique des évènements, mais il y a des temps dont l'histoire, malgré leur incontestable horreur, ressemble tellement à une farce, qu'elle est par elle-même une satire sous la main de l'historien."



of the kingdom, pass unnoticed in Paris amid the din of operas, of ballets, of songs, of orgies, and make equally little impression in good and in bad company. I leave observers to draw a horoscope from this formidable lethargy. It cannot be displeasing to the partisans of the excesses of the Revolution. It is a fact that the capital is in a strange condition of ignorance as to the real situation of the kingdom and of the provinces."

In the month of June he took occasion, in publishing a letter from Cahors full of fresh horrors, to make a solemn appeal to all parties. Remarking on the sanguinary character "so gratuitously imposed on the Revolution," he asks:—

"Can those who so cunningly engineered these excesses have sounded the depth of the soil in which they were planting the roots of anarchy? Can they have foreseen that after two years France, with all its laws and its tribunals, its magistrates and civic guards bound by solemn oaths to defend order and public safety, would still be an arena in which wild beasts devour unarmed men? Ah! how Europe, how philosophy, how every friend of liberty would have respected the Revolution, had not each of its steps been defiled by blood! Ah! that its insensate leaders had only had the foresight and humanity to perceive that when the first crisis had been decided in their favour, the part of patriotism was to preserve restraints instead of destroying them! Every week is signalised by an assassination. *Les cannibales*," he adds, "*qui écrivent font leur métier en justifiant les cannibales qui coupent les têtes et les portent en triomphe; ces deux races d'hommes sont du même sang.*"

The 21st of June 1791, the day of the flight to Varennes, was the occasion of another and still more

formidable domiciliary visit which put an end to Mallet du Pan's labours for more than two months.

"On that day," to quote his own account, "the section of the Luxembourg, without any legal authority, sent a detachment of soldiers and a commissioner to my house, and it was only by chance that on my way home with my wife I heard of what had happened. On a day of so much excitement prudence dictated that I should leave my house in possession of those who had made themselves masters of it. They questioned my servants in order to discover my whereabouts, and several of them announced their designs of conducting me to the Abbaye Saint-Germain, the new Bastille which has witnessed the confinement in the course of two years of more innocent persons than the old one had received during the whole reign of Louis XVI. The deputation examined my papers, carrying away and transcribing a portion of them, and leaving the rest under the guard of a couple of fusiliers."

Proceedings followed before the *Comité des Recherches* of the municipality, and it was only after a fortnight that Mallet du Pan was allowed to return to his house, during which time he was supposed either to have been imprisoned or murdered, [*tué civiquement dans la Rue Taranne*,] or to have fled to Brussels or Geneva. "Mallet du Pan," wrote Brissot's journal, the *Chronique de Paris*, '*a fui comme un roi*'. This paper raised the cry for proscription, inviting the patriots to hunt down the aristocratic newspapers. "From this day," it wrote on the 23rd of June, "we shall not allow the circulation of the *Ami du Roi*, nor of Mallet du Pan, nor of the *Gazette de Paris*, nor of the *Actes des Apôtres*." A little later it complained that the pursuit had slackened :—

‘On n’a pas même inquiété Mallet du Pan, qui se promène au Luxembourg, entouré d’une noble escorte de chevaliers de St. Louis, tous ébahis de son éloquence et de son tendre dévouement à l’esclavage!’

This highly coloured detail is all we have of Mallet’s existence at this time. So much of truth there is in it that he remained in Paris<sup>1</sup> during

<sup>1</sup>The following sketch by Mallet du Pan’s daughter, Madame Colladon, gives a vivid idea of the anxieties of the family life in Paris during these years :—

“Comprenez-vous mon enfance, passée aux premières horreurs de la Révolution ; ces soirées silencieuses, où assise à côté de ma mère, sur une petite chaise, chaque coup de marteau de la porte me causait une émotion, pensant qu’il annonçait mon père dont l’attente ne menait à rien moins qu’à croire chaque jour qu’on nous le ramènerait assassiné. Ma mère ne disait rien, et moi non plus ; mais quoique fort jeune (13 ans) je devinais et je partageais toutes ses impressions. Puis cette affreuse scène à l’opéra, où j’entendis vociférer *ce bon* Peuple contre les Aristocrates, et crier *Mallet du Pan à la lanterne*. Un signe de ma courageuse mère nous contient, mais je perdis subitement la mémoire, et le sentiment du lieu, et de ce qui se passait autour de moi ; et il fallut bien me sortir de cette loge, effrayé qu’on était de mes questions à voix basse. Mlle Morillon, notre amie, me fit prendre l’air et me soigna pendant que ma mère restait là immobile. Je date de ce jour une grande partie de mes maux actuels. Puis vinrent les affreuses journées des 5 et 6 Octobre, 1789—ce roulement lugubre du tambour—ces Gardes Nationales, à jamais exécrables pour moi—ces torrents de pluie—cette consternation de mon malheureux père, si justifiée par l’évènement—ces têtes portées au bout des piques. Plus tard, cette fuite du Roi, pendant laquelle il fallut, en hâte, fuir nous même notre maison—nous séparer—nous cacher—les uns ici, les autres là—et ces cris de ‘*Grande Arrestation du Roi à Varennes!*’ Ces cris, je les entends encore ; ils viennent encore me troubler jusqu’au fond de l’âme. Enfin, on quitta cette horrible France, et lorsqu’arrêtés dans la Diligence à la sortie de Paris pour crier *Vive la Nation!* ma mère s’empressait de le faire, ainsi qu’un Monsieur de Lasaussaye, ministre Protestant qui fit le



these two months while the existence of the monarchy was in the balance, watching we may suppose the internecine ravings of the press; of Brissot, Camille Desmoulins and Marat on the one hand, who re-echoed in their journals the sanguinary threats of the clubs, and of the royalist writers on the other, who subsidised by the court party exhausted themselves in libellous and outrageous sarcasm. He had fully determined, as he tells us, not to re-enter the arena if the monarchy fell in name as it had in fact. No one had more patiently and honestly tried the appeal to reason and argument on every constitutional and political point as it arose than he, but it had now become clear to him that nothing could resist the torrent of ignorant fanaticism which had overborne all idea of moderation, till there no longer existed any semblance of public opinion in France. "Nothing is more useless," he wrote, "than to combat the revolutionary fever with sheets of paper; *On ne convertit, on n'adoucit personne, les enthousiastes s'irritent comme les hydrophobes lorsqu'on leur présente le remède.*" Nothing was more futile than to appeal to a population debauched by the most shameful of all wars, a war of pamphlets. '*L'écrivainerie,*' wrote Montaigne, '*est le symptôme d'un siècle débordé;*' and Mallet du Pan, who often quoted the aphorism, traced many of the

voyage avec nous; il me fut impossible d'articuler un son, on m'aurait plutôt hachée: comme j'étais à la portière de la voiture, cela fut remarqué; et le danger passé, le bon Lasaussaye me gourmanda vivement. J'avais 14 ans; j'en ai 55, et suis la même; mes opinions ont été fixées pour la vie. Si j'aime peu le Peuple—j'ai certes mes raisons. Si je m'intéresse aux descendants de Louis XVI, c'est pour respect pour sa mémoire."

characteristics of the Revolution, the unchecked course of outrage, the terror which had frozen courage, the absence of generous speech and strong action, to the moral effeminacy caused by the torrent of periodical literature which had deluged the country. "Pamphlets were the arsenal upon which the oppressors drew to establish their tyranny, while the oppressed left their vindication to the printers, and readers in the midst of disorder and disaster looked upon the Revolution only as a sham fight of reasoning, eloquence and invective." What wonder if the publicist, convinced that the issue would be decided by force, had declined the melancholy task of ploughing the sand, or that he should have conceived a horror of the profession of a political writer which had been so prostituted by those who followed it!

Considerations like these, however, set forth in an article<sup>1</sup> which is among the most remarkable of Mallet du Pan's productions for its dignity, eloquence and argumentative force, were finally overruled by his sense of duty to his subscribers many of whom had given him touching proofs of their esteem and attachment, and by his generous reluctance to abandon the remnant of those who were determined to exhaust every effort in defence of the King. To their appeals he yielded,

<sup>1</sup> I regret the impossibility of printing this article as it stands, together with one in the following week, in defence of the nobles and clergy (*Mercur*, 3rd and 10th Sept. 1791). They would enable readers to form an opinion of Mallet's style as a journalist, and they paint the man with his earnestness, his fire, his love of true freedom, his hatred of injustice and violence, his repudiation of the idea that a bloody revolution was necessary to put an end to the abuses of the *ancien régime*.

not without a taunt at the expense of readers who appeared to look upon a journalist as a servant whom they had commissioned to defend their opinions while they took their ease or their pleasure, and who thought it a matter of course that a man should devote himself, at the risk of his life, his liberty and his property, to turning out every week a certain number of pages to amuse them '*durant l'heure du chocolat*'. For six months more until the publication of his opinions became a physical impossibility did he struggle on, and well did he fulfil his promise that "as long as he was allowed to hold a pen, he would ennoble it by steady perseverance in the paths of truth and justice".

The events which preceded and followed the flight of the royal family on the 21st of June had, in reality, destroyed the last chance of a restoration of constitutional authority to the Monarch. It was in May that Robespierre had succeeded, with the assistance of course of the Right, in carrying his crafty motion for the exclusion of the members of the Constitutional Assembly, '*athlètes vigoureux mais fatigués*' as he described them in his sentimental jargon, from becoming members of the second legislative Assembly which was to meet in September. This decision, which excluded the experienced moderate members from participation in public affairs, while it allowed the extremists to continue and increase their political activity in the clubs and municipality, immensely accelerated the march of the Revolution. For in the expiring Assembly the moderate party had been growing stronger, and the tardy adherence of the hitherto popular leaders, the Feuillant triumvirate Duport, Bar-



nave<sup>1</sup> and Alexandre de Lameth, to the party of order had given an actual majority to those who wished to see the executive strengthened. But in preventing the escape of the royal family, which would have saved them all, they made a fatal mistake, and although they were strong enough to spare the King the insult of a public trial, the Assembly proved again incapable of giving strength to government; and the revision of the constitution, rushed through in August, made no change of importance beyond decreeing that it should remain unaltered for thirty years. The King, who had become in 1789 "Chef Suprême du Pouvoir Exécutif," and then simply "Pouvoir Exécutif," was finally left in the position of "Premier fonctionnaire public," and

<sup>1</sup> Barnave, a young barrister from Grenoble with a reputation for oratory, had been sent to the States General as a disciple of Mounier, from whom, however, he soon dissociated himself to become a leader of the advanced party in the National Assembly. His *mot fatal*—*Ce sang est-il donc si pur ?* and his savage accusation against Malouet who was defending the Club Monarchique from attacks on account of their charity to the indigent—*Vous distribuez au peuple un pain empoisonné*—however inexcusable, did not betoken the character of an assassin or any intention to overthrow the monarchy. He was merely, as Malouet observed, an ardent and presumptuous young man. He was one of the members deputed to escort the royal family back to Paris after the 21st of June, and his change of front at this time was popularly attributed to a supposed infatuation conceived on that occasion for the Queen. Some years later Mallet du Pan wrote of him as a man whose death had done honour to the scaffold of the Republic. "History will pass judgment on the faults of M. Barnave; to-day it would be atrocious to notice anything but his mistakes. Whatever blame may attach to his conduct during the first years of the Revolution, we should not forget his devotion to the King and Queen after the Montmédi journey, his repentance, his efforts to defend the Monarchy which he had helped to undermine, his sufferings, his long captivity, and the courage of his last moments."

Mallet du Pan, who had as lately as May strongly blamed Burke's impolitic denunciation of the constitution, his '*outrages sanglants contre les lois d'un empire voisin*,' himself pitilessly analysed its provisions in September and exposed the results of the theory of the sovereignty of the people, even then, however, protesting that he would set the example of entire submission to the constitution if only it succeeded in holding its ground and re-establishing social order. Outside the Assembly the slight rally to moderate principles equally failed; and the attempt of Lafayette and Bailly to make head against the revolutionary party in Paris merely led to the so-called massacre of the Champ de Mars (17th July) and widened the breach between the *bourgeoisie* and the populace.

Such was the struggle which Mallet du Pan had watched in silence and with growing anxiety until his reappearance in the *Mercur*e on the 3rd September. On the 14th of that month, amid the noisy and factitious rejoicings of the capital, the royal prisoner in the Tuileries was reduced to signing the conditions presented to him. Entering the Assembly with the escort which remained to him, some national guards, esquires and pages, and without his *cordon bleu*, he solemnly accepted the revised constitution, beginning his speech standing, while the President, Thouret, sat with his legs crossed and his elbows on the arms of his chair, staring at the King.<sup>1</sup> When it is remembered

<sup>1</sup> "Au moment où le Roi prononçait les mots, 'Je jure d'être fidèle à la nation,' l'Assemblée s'était assise, et pour la première fois de sa vie, Louis XVI, pour la première fois depuis la fondation de la Monarchie, le roi de France, jurait debout fidélité à ses sujets assis. Mais ceux-ci, devenus le souverain, ne voyaient plus dans le roi que

that in July Robespierre had openly demanded the trial of the King; that Danton and the Cordeliers were agitating for his dethronement; and that Condorcet, the philosopher mathematician who a few months later exhausted intrigues and threats to place his wife at Court and obtain for himself the post of tutor to the Dauphin, and a little later still poisoned himself in prison to escape the guillotine, had just published his demonstration of the necessity of a republic, it was indeed a noteworthy act of courage on Mallet's part to have written of Louis XVI. as he did at this time. In terms of noble eulogy he spoke of him (*Mercure*, September 10th 1791) as a prince whose only fault it was to have judged others as virtuous as himself; who alone perhaps in the kingdom had himself desired the alliance of liberty with the monarchy; who had done more for the rights of the people than all the sovereigns and demagogues of ancient and modern times put together.<sup>1</sup>

But the question round which the hopes and fears of the leading actors in the struggle were now be-

le premier fonctionnaire salarié, légalement soumis à la déchéance. Après les mots 'Assemblée nationale Constituante' le Roi s'apercevant que lui seul était debout, a parcouru la salle d'un regard où la bonté tempérerait jusqu'à la surprise, et sa Majesté s'est assise et a poursuivi son discours" (*Mercure*, 24th Sept. 1791).

<sup>1</sup> "Je ne suis pas né sous sa domination; je donnerai mon sang pour le maintien du gouvernement républicain qui a formé mon enfance, mes inclinations, mon esprit, et mon caractère; mais je m'honore, avec tout ce que les états libres renferment d'hommes généreux, de verser des larmes sur le sort d'un Roi qui ne peut ni me récompenser ni me punir, sur le sort de la nation trompée qui a pu méconnaître l'étendue de ses magnanimes sacrifices, et la pureté de ses intentions," etc.



ginning to turn was that of the approach of war with Austria; and it is important, in view of Mallet's later attitude and the criticisms made upon it, to realise the position he took up during the ensuing months. Up to this time the European Powers, engrossed in the intrigues and negotiations which in the month of August closed the war between Russia and Turkey on the mediation of England and Prussia, and brought about a general pacification in accordance with Leopold's views, had paid but little attention to the desperate plight of the King of France. On the very day after the appearance of the King in the Assembly, that body in defiance of all treaty rights decreed the annexation of Avignon, an outrage which failed to arouse the opposition of the Powers. The Congress of Pillnitz is generally taken as having sounded the tocsin against the Revolution; but it was little more than an expression of platonic interest in the French monarchy, and it may rank from this point of view among the *comédies augustes* of history which Mallet called it. Its real importance is derived from the change it effected in the European balance of power by laying the foundation of an alliance between the two great German States, and from the handle it gave to the war party in France to inflame and alarm public opinion.

On the 15th of October Mallet du Pan surveyed the condition of Europe and carefully summed up the chances of war. The two great Powers, Austria and Prussia,<sup>1</sup> showed no sign of taking action, and though

<sup>1</sup> The possibility of Great Britain's interference was at this time hardly discussed. He speaks of "England disarmed and governed by a minister too prudent to enter into a league, the expenses of which

the disposition of Russia and Sweden was more doubtful, he repeated his conviction that the whole of Europe was peacefully inclined. If intervention did ultimately ensue it would be the cause of the people and not that of the kings which would arm the greater part of Europe in defence of order and civil freedom. As for the King of France, "so far from being a cause of provocation" (a remark which in view of his continual appeals and those of the Queen to the Austrian Court is hardly justified by the facts), "he is the one link which binds France to Europe. If the nation still holds any political rank, if her relations with the rest of the world are not yet entirely suspended, she owes it to Louis XVI. and to him alone." But if Europe was pacific two powerful sections of Frenchmen within and without were working for war. In the new Assembly, now in the hands of the party afterwards

would sooner or later provoke discussion in Parliament and in every class of the nation on the principles of the French Revolution". Later remarks throw a rather curious sidelight on the way European statesmen looked on England (as they still look on her) in the character of an ally. "De tous les états de l'Europe," he wrote, "l'Angleterre est celui qui a le mieux connu l'art de contracter des alliances pour en éluder le fardeau et pour en retirer les bénéfices . . . nulle puissance n'a porté à un si haut degré l'égoïsme dans les alliances ; elle n'en remplira jamais les engagements qu'autant qu'elle pourra le faire avec une utilité certaine." He instanced her conduct to Prussia in 1757 and during the troubles in Holland in 1788, and quoted the well-known opinion of Frederick the Great on the value of an English alliance. The earlier years of the revolutionary war gave another illustration of English methods. "Sa position insulaire ne lui permet de secourir une puissance que par des subsides. Donne-t-elle des secours de diversion ? C'est ordinairement pour s'en approprier les avantages" (by appropriating islands and commerce). *Mercure*, 28th January 1792.

known as the Girondists, Brissot<sup>1</sup> had taken Mirabeau's place on the Foreign Affairs Committee, and with his furious denunciations of the 20th of October against the potentates of Europe had launched his campaign which was to make war inevitable. On the other hand the French *émigrés* by their great gatherings and warlike preparations at Coblenz and Worms were doing their best to drag the German Powers into their domestic quarrel; they formed the text of the patriotic oratory of the Assembly and were the direct occasion of the dissensions between the European Governments and France. Mallet du Pan had never disguised his opinion of the emigration started by the cowardly flight of the Comte d'Artois and the Polignacs after the fall of the Bastille.<sup>2</sup> The emigration of this summer and autumn was on an enormous scale, and he

<sup>1</sup> Brissot, Mallet's old opponent in 1782 at Geneva, had long been outrageously violent in his attacks upon him. M. Sorel (*L'Europe et la Révolution Française*, vol. ii., pp. 301-2) well describes the man and his rôle at this period. His training had been that of the venal journalistic and political intrigue of London and Paris which Mallet had often signalised as one of the worst features of the pre-revolutionary epoch. In the position of importance into which his pushing and turbulent disposition had brought him in the new Assembly, "il disposait de l'Europe avec un aplomb imperturbable. C'était une espèce de Figaro exalté, ambitieux de mouvement bien plus que de puissance, assez léger pour tout dire, assez sincère pour tout croire, assez fanatique pour tout oser; serviable à ses amis, vindicatif avec ses adversaires, âpre à la brigue, désintéressé pour sa propre personne, et se faisant par là de ses passions même les plus mesquines des vertus d'État . . . on disait brissoter pour intriguer."

<sup>2</sup> "Jamais," he afterwards wrote, "je n'ai approuvé l'émigration, parce que j'ai toujours connu qu'il était absurde de quitter la France dans l'espoir de la sauver, et de se mettre dans la servitude des étrangers pour prévenir ou pour terminer une querelle nationale."



noted in October that six hundred naval officers had left the kingdom, that the epidemic had extended to officers of all ranks and in every branch of the army ; that the small *noblesse* of the provinces, who had suffered as much as any class from the abuses of the *ancien régime*, unlike the nobles who had besieged the anti-chambers of Versailles and were now doing equal disservice to their country at foreign courts,—that these lesser owners of the soil were flying *en masse*, many of them on foot, to the frontier, 1,200 having left Poitiers alone, and the whole of the same class from Brittany ; and that in many towns there now only remained the “artisan population, a club, and the devouring cloud of officials created by the constitution”. There is an interesting account (*Mercur*e, 18th October 1791) of a visit paid by some of these resident landowners to Mallet du Pan at this time, men who till then had never left their country homes.<sup>1</sup> They came to thank

<sup>1</sup> “ Il est fort aisé ” (he had written on 10th September) “ à un agitateur de mauvaise foi de représenter tous les nobles comme des sangsues et tous les Pasteurs comme des fripons : ces mensonges n’empêchent pas que, sur cent propriétaires qualifiés, quatre-vingt n’étaient connus de leurs vassaux que sous des rapports de bienfaisance ; que le château fournissait des aliments dans les maladies, des aumônes plus ou moins abondantes chaque année, des travaux continuels, des places aux enfants, des recommandations utiles aux pères, et des répit dans les paiements des redevances en cas de détresse particulière ou de calamité publique. La noblesse des Provinces habitait leurs terres une grande partie de l’année, et y dépensait par conséquent une somme considérable de ses revenus. J’admets la dureté de quelques intendants domestiques, l’insolence de la valetaille, et quelquefois les hauteurs trop impérieuses des maîtres ; ces torts particuliers ne balançaient point les avantages infinis qui résultaient de cette clientèle, de ce Patriarchat entre le seigneur et ses vassaux. On n’avait pas besoin sûrement d’une révolution sanglante pour faire disparaître les abus de

him with tears in their eyes for his efforts to preserve their lives and properties from fire and sword. When they told him that they were about to follow their compatriots to the Low Countries, he endeavoured to give them hopes of better times, to persuade them to remain. They replied that it was not regret for their lost privileges which caused them to seek relief in foreign countries, and they drew heart-rending pictures of the oppression, the outrages, the robbery which made their existence in the provinces a literal impossibility. From the fanaticism of despair which he read in their hearts, and from the number of those who shared their feelings, Mallet du Pan augured danger to the newly established "liberties" of France; and it is not surprising that the rulers of the country, unable or unwilling in the midst of the anarchy they had created to act on Mallet's warning that the only way to recall the absent or retain the fugitives was to guarantee their freedom, their religion and their personal safety, should have striven as they did to legislate against their emigration, and to force the Powers to disband and disperse their gatherings in foreign countries.

The resignation of the Foreign Office on the 27th of November by the Comte de Montmorin, who remained by the King's side as his secret adviser till the end and who shared his fate,<sup>1</sup> the appointment of the

cette institution ; abus bien peu onéreux aux campagnes en comparaison de tant d'autres sous lesquelles elles gémissaient, et spécialement les exactions des gens de loi qui ont remplacé les gentilshommes dans la faveur de la multitude."

<sup>1</sup> He was killed during the September massacres. One of his sons was drowned as a young naval officer, the other died at the age of twenty-two on the guillotine with his mother, shouting *Vive le roi*

feeble Delessart as his successor, and of Narbonne,<sup>1</sup> the friend and *protégé* of Madame de Staël, to the Ministry of War, swept away the last barrier in France against the war, and gave full rein to the efforts of the Brissotins to goad the unwilling Emperor into taking up the challenge. There no longer remained in the Assembly a single voice to point out the desperate character of the move upon which the destiny of France and of the monarchy was being staked, to offer resistance to the motives of real and simulated patriotism, always so powerful in a high-spirited nation on the imminent approach of war, or to unmask the designs of those who had so skilfully fanned the flame of patriotic ardour. For one reason or another all parties were, or seemed to be, united in the determination to bring matters to an issue. Brissot and the Girondists desired a war which should identify the Revolution with patriotic feeling, and, by confounding the cause of the king with that of the foreigners and the *émigrés*, should complete the ruin of the monarchy and establish a republic to be presided over by themselves. The pure Royalists and the *émigrés* looked forward to a counter-revolution as a result of foreign conquest which would re-establish the *ancien régime*. Narbonne and the ministers on the one hand, and

at the death of each of his fellow victims; his remaining child, the Comtesse de Beaumont, escaped the guillotine, and was befriended like so many others by Madame de Staël, but she did not long survive the catastrophes which had overwhelmed the family of this faithful servant of the king.

<sup>1</sup> "Le Comte Louis de Narbonne," wrote the Queen to Fersen, "est enfin Ministre de la Guerre. Quelle gloire pour Madame de Staël, et quel plaisir pour elle d'avoir toute l'armée à elle!"



Barnave on the other, actively promoted hostilities with the idea that foreign war would regenerate the army, which under a victorious general might pacify the country, suppress anarchy and consolidate the civil conquests of the Revolution.

Outside the Assembly, indeed, two strangely contrasted forces, Robespierre and Danton on the one hand, and the King and his most intimate advisers on the other, were working against the war. Robespierre and Danton were openly opposed to it for the simple reason that however favourable from the anti-monarchical point of view it might prove to be, the advantage would fall to the Girondists; and they were no more anxious for the rule of Brissot than for that of Louis, who might moreover be rehabilitated by a successful campaign. They considered therefore that till the Revolution was completed in their sense, till the war against the King of France was over, war against the kings of Europe was madness.<sup>1</sup>

The position of the King, complicated as it was by the pressure of the various royalist factions and of the *émigrés*, by the obvious dangers of the internal situation of the monarchy, by an entanglement of contradictory instructions and secret missions from Louis and the Queen, and by the official and secret diplomacy of the Ministry, is less simply stated. But that he was wholly opposed to the policy which was being forced upon him is certain, and Mallet du Pan's own conduct and his repeated statements throw much light upon this point. The King viewed with the utmost displeasure the violence of his brothers and the *émigrés*, who professing to consider

<sup>1</sup> Sorel, ii., 317.

him a prisoner had emancipated themselves from his control, disregarded his instructions, and urged upon the unwilling Kaunitz and the Emperor action of a kind which the distracted French sovereigns knew to be disastrous, however much they may have desired Austrian assistance. When, on the 14th of December, he had been forced to assent to the decree of the Assembly against the *rassemblement* of *émigrés* in Trèves which brought the Government within sight of war, he had written privately to Baron de Breteuil,<sup>1</sup> informing him that he did not expect the Elector to accede to his demands, . . . and instructing him that he should summon the Powers to take measures for the dispersal and disarmament of the *émigrés*, and then re-assemble them, disarmed, and defend the Electors. If war ensued it would not be a civil war from which he always shrank in horror, but a political war in which France could not engage with success, and the result of which would be to throw the French into his arms as mediator between them and the foreign army. The terms of this letter harmonise with the instructions with which Mallet du Pan went to Frankfort a few months later, and in the turn the King thus sought to give to the impending war he was no doubt in agreement with the advisers to whom at this time, and on this question, he had given his confidence, Montmorin, Malouet and Mallet du Pan. The course he took was perfectly consistent with the conviction which was held by the three friends, which was expressed, as we shall see, with the utmost persistency by Mallet, and which was shared by the King himself, that war would be disastrous to the monarchy.

<sup>1</sup> Sorel, ii., 332.

'Louis XVI,' wrote Mallet du Pan,<sup>1</sup> at a later date, '*regardait cette guerre comme le tombeau de sa famille, de la monarchie, de la France, et comme le sien propre.*' Montmorin, he adds, prophetically described to him before he left Paris, in great detail, the results he feared from it and which actually followed. It was not, however, in an attitude of passive resignation or pessimistic inaction, an attitude entirely foreign to his character, that Mallet du Pan had watched the growing storm. He had vigorously insisted that the King should use his veto against the first Jacobin decrees of the Legislative Assembly respecting the *émigrés* and the refractory priests; and the imposition upon Louis of ministers whom he regarded as the worst enemies of the monarchy had drawn from him the reproach, "Will the conscience of the Prince be eternally subordinated to circumstances?" Among his private notes is an account of an effort he made before Montmorin resigned the Foreign Office to clear up the position of the King with regard to the Assembly. "*Malouet et moi,*" he writes, decided Montmorin to propose to the King, in order to prove to the foreign courts that he was either free or a prisoner, to request the Assembly to allow him to go to Fontainebleau or Compiègne and there choose a ministry of his own. If they refused, his subjection would be demonstrated. If they agreed, the King would be able to appoint a ministry of vigorous and devoted men, and carry out his own views. Montmorin pressed the suggestion on the King three times without success, even throwing himself at the feet of the Queen. They

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondance Politique pour servir à l'histoire du Républicanisme Français*, 1776. See note at end of this pamphlet.



refused, afraid that the demand would cause an insurrection. This incident is only one of many in which, by fatalistic optimism, by constitutional indolence and want of resolution, by his "invincible repugnance to the *travail de la pensée*," the King threw away his chances of safety. The failure of the flight to Varennes confirmed his natural disposition to let matters drift. The following June he refused another offer from Duport, who pressed his services upon him with every sign of repentance and devotion. '*Non*,' he replied, after pacing the room a few moments, '*au milieu des dangers qui nous environnent je ne dois pas en aller chercher un nouveau*.' Courage he possessed in the highest degree, but courage of the purely passive kind, and Mallet du Pan notes that the *dégoût de la vie*, the difficulties of his position and religious exaltation had inspired him with a profound indifference to the death which he expected and even desired.

After the 20th of June 1792, when Madame de la Roche Aymon congratulated him on his courage and begged him to take measures for his future safety, he merely said, '*Ah vous êtes femme, et l'on ne vous a pas, comme moi, rassasiée de la vie*'.<sup>1</sup> An able man, as Morris observed, would not have fallen into his situation. The retrospect of the occasions on which a "small-beer character" (to use the American Minister's uncere- monious expression) threw away one by one his chances of averting revolution and of securing his own freedom, proves with irresistible force that a strong sovereign might even at the last moment have saved his country from anarchy, and his own house from the fate which Mirabeau had prophesied for it at the hands of the

<sup>1</sup> Anecdotes from Mallet du Pan's *Notes*.

populace in the terrible words, '*Ils battront le pavé de leurs cadavres*'. But Mallet du Pan, who knew and sympathised so strongly with Louis' views and wishes for France, wrote of him always with a touch of personal feeling very unusual with him. He is tender even to his faults: "Continually placed between the dangers of temerity which were great and those of prudence which were perhaps greater, he could never take a line inconsistent with the gentleness and easy-going amiability of his character. Courageous, as regarded his own life, timid as a child for those he loved, he had the heroism of resignation."

It only remained therefore for Mallet du Pan to do all a journalist could to oppose the growing frenzy for war, and he lost no time in dissociating himself from the line followed by all of those who were stirring it up.

"It is impossible," he wrote,<sup>1</sup> "for a true friend of this monarchy to consider the approach of war without dismay. It is impossible not to lament that before arriving at this fatal extremity no means of averting it should have been sought for, that no expression save that of hatred should have made itself heard."

A little later he repeated his warnings,<sup>2</sup> in a prophetic denunciation of the ideals of the Jacobins on the one hand and of the ultra-Royalists on the other, the two political parties so different in their origin, so alike in their methods and their character, against which he was to struggle throughout the course of the Revolution.

"I shall not cease to repeat what coming events will teach with far greater force that the war will complete the dissolution of the monarchy, or impose a fresh servitude upon it. A federal republic in case of

<sup>1</sup> *Mercur*e, 17th Dec. 1791.

<sup>2</sup> On 7th Jan. 1791.

its success, a terrible counter-revolution in case of failure. . . . I venture to predict that it will not be for the preservation of the throne, or of the friends of monarchical government of whatever section, that our arms will triumph; while if they are unsuccessful, the monarchy, the laws and true freedom will fall under the dominion of force . . . and another constitution will be created with the very sword which will have served to destroy that which now exists."

With an insight which is remarkable when it is remembered that the world was yet to witness the demonstration of the justice of his analysis, he went on to describe the nature of the convulsion which was to place civilisation at the mercy of the strongest; to define the doctrine which placed liberty in the exercise of power by the majority, and equality in the restoration of all the "rights" given by nature to mankind at their creation; and to point out the results of its application to a great empire "in which beings without virtues and without vices, indifferent to good as to evil, were the passive instruments of ferocious sophists and of enthusiastic innovators of the class and of the principles thrown up in times of disorder."<sup>1</sup> The threatened classes on the other hand consisted of men—

<sup>1</sup> A famous phrase, often quoted since, occurs in a passage describing the memorable subversion of the Lower Empire by the northern barbarians, a passage in which Constantinople, its feeble and corrupt government, and its population, which "*sous les inclinations de Sybarites cachaient l'âme des cannibales*," was described with evident reference to the actual condition of Paris. "*Dans le tableau*," he writes, "*de cette mémorable subversion on découvre l'image de celle dont l'Europe est menacée. Les Huns et les Hérules, les Vandales et les Goths ne viendront ni du Nord ni de la mer Noire; ils sont au milieu de nous.*"



“enfeebled by self-indulgence, astounded by an upheaval of which they had no experience, severed by the very diversity of their interests, painfully reckoning up their sacrifices at a moment when the enemy is about to relieve them of the necessity of making any ; —combattant avec mollesse, avec la fausse sécurité, et l'égoïsme, contre les passions dans leur état d'indépendance, contre la pauvreté féroce et l'immoralité hardie”.

If he thus sought to dissipate the illusions of the Royalists, he discerned with no less clearness the effects of the war on the edifice of European society, the insecure foundations of which none more fully recognised than he.

“No epoch of history, ancient or modern, presents a crisis of greater gravity.<sup>1</sup> The sovereigns will perhaps presume too much if they think they can unravel it by the simple force of arms.” If they neglect to “appeal to public opinion, to point out that the interest of their subjects lies in the preservation of public order and lawful government, the excesses of the French Revolution may well subvert Europe from one end to another”.

In these words he struck the note to which in the following years he constantly returned ; as he did when he contrasted the enthusiasm of the war party in France and their threats, “no mere words,” to raise subjects against their sovereigns, to corrupt the soldiery, to burn the *châteaux* while respecting the cottages, to free the people from all authority and to make use, in Brissot's phrase, of the “dagger of the tyrannicide,” with the irresolution of Cabinets

<sup>1</sup> *Mercur*e, 14th January 1791.

and Governments. Everything, he observed, favoured the authors of social convulsion in Europe which seemed to have no common ground for resistance. "The first great nation which attempted to change the face of society would be met only by divided counsels, and the number and complication of the conventions which bound the States of Europe gave the measure of the motives of discord between them." Not, however, without apparent reason did the reactionary Royalists look forward to the chances of a foreign war; and the confidence with which Mallet du Pan himself, once war was declared, anticipated during the first campaigns the success of the allies was founded on his knowledge of the condition of impotence to which France had been reduced. More than once he drew attention to the growing disorganisation of the country.

"Everywhere<sup>1</sup> authority was without strength, and illegitimate authorities were masters of the law and of civil liberty. Here the municipal officers insulted and beaten at Caen, there the directory of the department of Gers flying from an outraged and seditious mob; here convoys of grain, there convoys of specie, stopped with violence; the departments arbitrarily closing the churches and executing the decree against the priests notwithstanding the royal negative which deprived it of the character of law; . . . the people impoverished and driven to desperation by the scourge of paper money and the excessive dearness of provisions; proprietors of all ranks terrified, fleeing, imploring in vain the return of peace and security; a fleet without a single officer, an army with barely two hundred, the new generals already calumniated like their predecessors, ministers libelled every day despite their

<sup>1</sup> *Mercure*, 11th February 1792.

efforts at conciliation, every moderate man condemned as a traitor—how was a nation so situated to make head against the best armies and the most experienced generals of the continent?"

It was, however, far from the writer's intention to encourage by pictures like these the hopes of the Royalists whose hatred he had earned by his opposition to the war, hopes whose complete success in his opinion could only inaugurate a fresh cycle of political disaster for France. Nor did he share the illusions of those who asserted with insolent iteration that "disorder itself would bring about a restoration of order," that "anarchy would reconstitute despotism"; and he rebuked the easy optimism of men who "in their boxes at the opera, or with their foot on the step of the carriages which were carrying them to Coblenz," cheered themselves with the thought that "France loved her King," that she "could not do without the monarchy," that "democracy was perishing of itself"! "It is absurd," he said, "to imagine that a vast monarchy fourteen centuries old which had been shattered in a moment, would be restored, equally in a moment, by the progress of anarchy or the inconstancy of the multitude." Rather on the contrary did he dwell on the signs which few but he perceived, and which for years the allied Courts ignored in spite of all his attempts to enlighten them, that anarchy was about to assume the character of a power which was to dominate all legal authority; and that the elements of revolution would only be systematised by war. Europe was soon enough to learn the truth of this prediction when Danton with his energy, his practical grasp, his political aptitude and his freedom from all



hampering prejudices, raised the armies and created the dictatorship of the Committee, which enabled Carnot to organise victory and in a national sense saved France. But appeal and warning alike were useless to those who could not or would not see their true interests, and mere writing was powerless against the rush of events. While on the one hand the assassination of Gustavus of Sweden (the Don Quixote of the counter-revolution as Catherine II. named him) weakened the chance of a successful pursuit of war, on the other the death of Leopold, the accession of a Girondist ministry, the pusillanimity of the majority of the Legislative Assembly, brought the country to the actual declaration of war, and forced the king to sign with tears in his eyes the decree of his ministers. 'Chacun,' wrote Mallet afterwards, '*peut se rappeler la profonde tristesse de sa contenance et de sa voix lorsqu'il vint annoncer à l'Assemblée la résolution de son Conseil.*'

By this time the task of the writer had become impossible. Moderation, he wrote, was treated as a crime. Accused of being an '*aristocrate permanent et aussi incurable que Maury*,' Mallet du Pan was now the mark of denunciation and sarcasm in the press, in the street, in the theatre. '*Mallet pendu*' was Camille Desmoulins' significant nickname, or '*Mallet Mercure, Mallet le Charlatan, fameux par ses pillules mercuriales, hebdomadaires et antipatriotiques*'! Four civic assaults on his house, three actual arrests and one hundred and fifteen denunciations give the measure of the persecution to which he had been subjected, and now several members of the Assembly warned him that his arrest and his removal to and trial at Orleans had been decided in the Republican Committee, and that the

efforts of the Right would be powerless to save him. In a final article, therefore, he once more with singular fearlessness told the truth to friends and enemies, and urged that it was the height of madness, in view of the gulf which was yawning before them all, to persist in wrangling over the points which divided them instead of combining on those which were common to them.

With these words came to an end Mallet's eight years' connection with the *Mercure*,<sup>1</sup> and a journalistic record which any one who studies it page by page in the original must pronounce to be unique. Composed as it is of detached articles and paragraphs on passing events, there runs through the whole work a unity of purpose and thought based on invariable principles; and it stands alone for its coherence and consistency of view, for essential moderation, for its constant appeal to facts to reason to common sense and to public morality, for foresight and for unswerving and indomitable courage. Celebrated as the name of Mallet du Pan was to become on a wider field, there is no period of his life upon which a biographer can dwell with greater satisfaction than upon these early years during which his opinions were developed in actual contact and in daily struggle with the men and forces of the Revolution, years in which he showed in the highest degree not only, to use Carlyle's phrase, the "assurance of a man," but the qualities of practical statesmanship so rare among his French contemporaries.

<sup>1</sup>The *Mercure* was continued under Peuchet's direction till its long and honourable career was terminated on 10th August 1792.

It was not without protest that the King and his advisers heard of the intention of the one remaining champion of their views to abandon the field. But the necessity of the step was soon recognised, and it was decided upon Malouet's suggestion to utilise Mallet's departure by entrusting him with a mission of the utmost delicacy and importance, that of representing to the brothers of the King as well as to the Emperor and the King of Prussia the true situation of the kingdom, and the intention and views of the King as to the war and its consequences. Conferences followed between Mallet du Pan, Bertrand de Moleville and Montmorin; and Mallet du Pan was requested to draw up the heads of a manifesto to be issued by the Powers. The King fully approved the draft, annotating it with his own hand, and Mallet then prepared the definite instructions which formed the basis of his subsequent action. The question of his credentials, absolutely necessary to ensure the envoy a hearing among the multitudes of real and pretended secret agents who inundated Germany at this moment, was a subject of anxious consideration. But the danger to which the discovery of any written authorisation would have exposed the king finally decided the ministers to despatch Mallet du Pan without credentials, which were to follow him and which did after some vicissitudes ultimately reach him. He was charged to maintain absolute secrecy as to his mission, and on the 21st of May he departed to Geneva, leaving his family in Paris in order to divert suspicion. From Geneva he made his way without delay to Frankfort, where he was to await the arrival of the two Monarchs for the coronation of the Emperor Francis.



## CHAPTER V.

MISSION TO FRANKFORT—VISIT TO BRUSSELS—THE  
“CONSIDERATIONS”—THE TERROR.

1792-1794.

No negotiator ever had a more difficult task than that which faced the unaccredited representative of a monarchy *in extremis* on his arrival at Frankfort in the middle of June. The Emperor and the King of Prussia were not expected for the opening of the diet and the coronation ceremonies until the following month, so Mallet du Pan addressed himself to that part of his instructions which related to the French Princes. It must be admitted that for the purpose of influencing them the envoy was singularly ill-chosen. He had never disguised his opinion of the action of the *émigrés* or his belief that the *ancien régime* was gone for ever, and he had been bitterly attacked in Paris as the chief of the party described as *Monarchiens*, a sect as odious to the pure Royalists as the Jacobins. The Princes on their side had been for months acting in direct contravention of the ideas of the King, they had arrogated to themselves the position of mediators between the allies and the French people, and they were determined not to stand aside in the coming struggle. The outbreak of the war, indeed, which seemed to crown the hopes of the *émigrés* was not

favourable to moderate counsels ; and the influence of Calonne and the ultra-Royalists made Mallet's representations to the Princes, although supported by their wiser counsellors such as De Castries, highly unpalatable. In spite of more than one journey to Coblenz he never therefore succeeded in obtaining an interview with them, until his reception by the sovereigns forced them into a momentary and delusive compliance with his views. It was the opening chapter of relations with the emigration which led him to appreciate the sagacity of the remark made by Cardinal de Retz '*qu'on a plus de peine à vivre avec les gens de son parti qu'avec ceux qui n'en sont pas.*' His futile but unceasing efforts to save the royalist cause from the consequences of its own blindness, prejudice and ignorance, are henceforth graphically portrayed in a long-sustained correspondence with the chief advisers of the Princes, and form as we shall see the real tragedy of Mallet du Pan's political career during the next few years. Meanwhile the Revolution was making alarming progress in Paris, and the situation of the King, described in Malouet's letters, was becoming daily more critical. On the 19th of June, after the King had vetoed the decree relating to the priests and the *fédérés*, he had written to his confessor : '*J'ai fini avec les hommes, je dois me tourner vers Dieu. On annonce pour demain de grands malheurs : j'aurai du courage.*' The 20th accordingly had witnessed the invasion of the Tuileries by sixty thousand *sans-culottes*, when the royal family was saved only by some revulsion of feeling caused in the mob by the spectacle of the King's calm and resigned courage. It may be imagined with what anguish of impatience his envoy, who was only

too well informed of what was passing in Paris, waited in enforced inaction for an opportunity of fulfilling his mission. All was postponed to the absorbing importance of the election and coronation of the Emperor which at last took place on the 14th of July. It is disappointing, but somewhat characteristic, that Mallet du Pan should have left no description of the ceremony which then took place for the last time with all the ancient pomp of the Holy Roman Empire, beyond remarking in a letter to his wife on the sumptuousness of the imperial equipages and liveries, "magnificence never approached by the court of Versailles," and observing that the young Emperor was the object of public idolatry and had won all hearts by the charm, delicacy and modesty of his features, and the propriety of his speeches and bearing. Little did he or any of those who took part in the pageant imagine the coincidence, since pointed out, that at the same moment the last King of the old monarchy of France was for the second time renewing his oath to the constitution on the Champ de Mars, surrounded by an armed and hostile multitude; little did they foresee that he was never again to appear among his people till he was led forth to execution, or that the war which was about to open would not only seal his fate, but would ultimately prove the destruction of the Empire itself. Even now difficulties of etiquette and diplomatic punctilio delayed the opening of the negotiations; and it was not till Mallet du Pan had received the note from the hand of Louis XVI. which is itself an eloquent and pathetic witness of his desperate situation<sup>1</sup> that he was able

<sup>1</sup> Facsimile of autograph note by Louis XVI. transmitted to Mallet du Pan to serve as his credentials during his mission to the



to triumph over the intrigues of his opponents and especially of the Russian minister Romanzoff, and secure his presentation to the Emperor, the Duke of Brunswick, and the King of Prussia, the latter of whom asked many questions on the state of France and the position of the royal family. Nothing could apparently have been more satisfactory than the conferences which followed between Mallet du Pan and Cobenzel on behalf of Austria and Haugwitz and Heyman acting for Prussia. The ministers declared the intention of the Powers to conform in all respects to the wishes of the King of France; they assured his envoy that they were influenced by no views of ambition, of personal interest or of conquest in entering on the war, they approved in every particular of his draft of the declaration to be issued, and they showed a salutary distrust of the designs of Coblenz. Writing on the 17th of July to his wife, Mallet du Pan said:—

“For the last week I have been up to the neck in business, morning, evening and even at night. I cannot describe the effect produced by my journey, my memoranda, my conferences, nor the degree of confidence which has been shown to me. Everything I ask is granted, and I could not have more influence if I had been a minister of State. Everything goes well and in conformity with the

allied sovereigns at Frankfort. It is written at the top of a half sheet of notepaper, and is unsigned.

*la personne qui présentera ce billet connaît mes intentions on peut prendre confiance à ce qu'elle dira.*

[La personne qui présentera ce billet connaît mes intentions on peut prendre confiance à ce qu'elle dira.]

wishes of the King, who has expressed to me his great satisfaction." He mentioned that the manifesto was to appear at the end of the month, containing the famous warning "that the city of Paris was to be held responsible for the safety of the royal family and to be destroyed by fire and sword if they were harmed, *non plus une plaisanterie, nous touchons au dénouement*".

His work seemed done, and after the departure of the Emperor on the 19th Mallet du Pan set out for Geneva. On the 25th the appearance of the Brunswick Manifesto showed that the instructions, the advice, the proclamation itself which he had brought direct from the Tuileries and which he had had no small share in inspiring, had been disregarded and set aside.<sup>1</sup> The explanation as we now know it was simple enough. The more avowed representatives of the King and Queen, Breteuil, Fersen and Mercy Argenteau, had used language with regard to the employment of force and terror which harmonised much more readily with the designs of the King of Prussia and the *émigré* princes than the more politic recommendations of the Genevese agent, and Calonne and Fersen had little difficulty in inducing the two monarchs to approve of a manifesto re-written, partly indeed on his lines, by M. de Limon, an ex-intendant of the Duc d'Orléans, deep in the intrigues of the Palais Royal and of the emigration. The judgment of the Duke of Brunswick

<sup>1</sup> Bertrand de Moleville records in his *Memoirs* that Mallet du Pan received by the king's orders 2,000 *écus* for his expenses, a sum which he characteristically refused to accept unless on condition of keeping an account of his disbursements and returning the surplus at the close of the negotiations. The account of the Mission given in these *Memoirs* is inaccurate in many particulars.

condemned this manifesto which he modified and which he afterwards said he would have given his life not to have signed, but his essential weakness as a man of action was revealed when he allowed his scruples to be overborne by his desire to stand well with Prussia and the Princes. The opinion of the unfortunate King, most deeply concerned but least consulted in the whole transaction, was shown by his commands to Mallet du Pan to return at once to Frankfort, commands which he did not receive until it was too late to obey them.

The essential point in the King's opinion as shown in Mallet du Pan's instructions<sup>1</sup> was to preserve the character of a foreign war waged by one Power against another,<sup>2</sup> to eliminate all idea of collusion between Louis XVI. and the foreign courts, to bring about as a result of war an arbitration between the King and the foreign Powers on the one hand and between the King and the French nation on the other. The language to be used was such as to inspire both terror and confidence. Extreme threats were to be used only against the extreme leaders of the Revolution who were carefully distinguished from the people, while stress was laid on the danger and injustice of confounding the less extreme factions with the Jacobins. Any design for

<sup>1</sup> This important document was printed in Prof. Smythe's *Lectures on the French Revolution*, vol. ii., and in Sayous' *Life*, vol. i., p. 427. M. Albert Sorel (*L'Europe et la Révolution*, ii., 475 *sqq.* and 508 *sqq.*) gives a detailed account of the negotiations, and of Mallet's part in them; as also does Mr. J. H. Clapham in his recent able and scholarly essay on the *Causes of the War of 1792* (Cambridge, 1899), p. 210 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> "Le roi joint ses prières aux exhortations pour engager les Princes et les Français émigrés à ne point faire perdre à la guerre actuelle, par un concours hostile et offensif de leur part, le caractère de guerre étrangère, faite de Puissance à Puissance."



the dismemberment of the kingdom was to be disclaimed by the allies. Convinced that France would never submit to the re-establishment of the *ancien régime* and never weary of insisting on the necessity of recognising this fact, Mallet had urged that at least no form of government should be proposed for the country, and that the declaration should be confined to a simple statement that the Powers were arming for the re-establishment of the monarchy and the legitimate royal authority, the freedom of the King and the restoration of peace. They would treat only with the King, and after his release a general plan of restoration under the auspices of the Powers would be determined on. The language used though strong and decided was not violent, and there was perhaps a chance that the frank, vigorous and reasonable tone of such a document might have appealed to the better sense of the nation. It went at all events as far in the path of conciliation as the disastrous condition of things admitted of.

The terms of the Brunswick Manifesto destroyed what little chance of success there had been in Mallet's mission. Some of his bases were indeed retained, but while the weapon of terror was freely resorted to all that might have inspired confidence disappeared. The manifesto was haughty and inflammatory in its language, and the threats indiscriminately levelled against all who had acquiesced in the Revolution were but poorly counterbalanced by a paragraph which extended the protection of the allies to those who should instantly concur in the re-establishment of order. As Morris observed it might be translated: "Be all against me for I am opposed to you all; and make a good resistance

for there is no longer any hope!" So, indeed, it was understood in France in so far as it had any visible or serious effect ('*la déclaration du duc de Brunswick*,' wrote a well-qualified observer to Mallet du Pan, '*ne fait aucune sensation : on en rit*'), and it is more than doubtful whether Mallet's draft, had it been adopted, would have had a different effect. The differences between the two documents, serious as they are, are chiefly differences of detail and manner. They agree in their pretension of interference in the affairs of a foreign State, in their appeal to one party against another, in their ostensible object, a restoration of the power of the King by means of a counter-revolution to be effected if necessary by force, and it is difficult to understand how Mallet du Pan could have persuaded himself that a foreign war, conducted as he had recommended, would have been preferable in its results to a civil war, or would have averted its horrors. That he had been hopeful is clear from the tenor of his letters, and it is perhaps not unnatural that, absorbed in the negotiation in the success of which both the King and his envoy had persuaded themselves lay the only hope of safety, Mallet should have lost sight for the moment of the truth, of which no one was better aware than himself, that the mission was at best a desperate expedient to avert the worst consequences of war. That he was profoundly conscious of the impolicy of the manifesto actually issued is evident from his frequent references to it in after years.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He wrote for instance in 1796: "Les alliés débutent par un manifeste tel qu'on l'eût écrit sur le champ de deux victoires, et qui met au ban de leur juridiction et de leurs bayonnettes les quatre cinquièmes d'une nation de 24 millions d'âmes" (*Correspondance pour servir, etc.*).

For the moment, however, such thoughts and his own disappointment at the result of the negotiations into which he had thrown himself with so much energy were put aside, while he watched the development of the policy of force upon which the Powers were now embarked. There are many indications that he thought the military triumph of the foreign armies not improbable, and his belief that a *dénouement* in this sense was about to be reached was strengthened by the view of the imposing preparations of the allies at Frankfort. There is indeed little doubt that if Brunswick had conducted his campaign with vigour and determination he might have justified the policy of the manifesto, and had Paris at his feet in a few weeks. "I am persuaded," wrote Morris from Paris, "that he would have met with as much support as opposition." But unequal to the occasion in war as he had been in council, Brunswick threw away the chance,<sup>1</sup> and from his refuge at Geneva Mallet du Pan could only follow with growing consternation the disastrous repulse of the foreign in-

<sup>1</sup> "Le malheur du duc de Brunswick fut d'avoir trop écouté les émigrés, il partagea leurs illusions, et la résistance inattendue qu'il rencontra le surprit au point de l'intimider et de lui faire perdre contenance. A la canonnade de Valmy le 20 septembre, le duc de Brunswick aperçut la cavalerie Française à pied, et dont les chevaux non bridés mangeaient encore le foin. Il se retourna vers ses assistants et leur dit, 'Voyez, Messieurs, à quelles troupes nous avons à faire, qui attendent avec sang-froid que nous soyons sur elles pour monter à cheval et nous charger!' Cette pensée lui fit ralentir l'action. Eh bien! l'on a su depuis, avec certitude, et Dumouriez l'a confirmé à Bruxelles, que cette même cavalerie lui avait formellement et obstinément résisté sur l'ordre de monter à cheval et qu'elle était décidée à se rendre aux Prussiens! . . . Le duc s'était imaginé qu'il irait à Paris sans tirer un coup de fusil." (From Mallet du Pan's notes.)



vaders, disorganised by the very engine of terror which was to have crushed the revolutionary leaders ; and the welter of events in Paris, where, in the rising of the 10th of August organised by Danton, and the massacres of September—his “sombre acquiescence” in which is the one great blot on his reputation if he is to be judged from the plane of civilised statesmanship—the Girondist fiction of constitutional government had disappeared. The mighty contest of the Revolution against Europe had in fact opened. It is one of the claims of Mallet du Pan to distinction that he was the earliest to recognise the new phase of the great convulsion, and that he did not hesitate to take his part on the wider stage of European politics with the same unsolicited and unrewarded devotion which he had displayed in the championship of the principles of social order in France itself.

Meanwhile at Geneva Mallet du Pan had rejoined his wife and children, who had just about this time escaped from Paris. When he left the capital in May—

“my mother,” writes her son, “actuated by considerations of duty, and in consequence of the desire felt by my father and his political friends on the occasion of his mission to Frankfort that his departure should be kept as quiet as possible, and that his domestic establishment should not be broken up, remained alone in Paris with her young family for nearly four months, during a period of the most fearful excitement. She afterwards set out in the diligence, then the safest conveyance, with her three young children and one maid-servant who had come with us to Paris in 1783, to join my father at Geneva ; and this, in August 1792 within a month of the massacres of September. She left our apartments in the Rue de Tournon with the

whole of the furniture and library in charge of a friend who was afterwards obliged to fly for his life, and the whole was seized by the patriots and sold.”<sup>1</sup>

The son, then a boy living in Geneva with an uncle, goes on to give an interesting account of the state of things in that city:—

“The delight of being again united to my family far outweighed the melancholy circumstances of their return. We were all sanguine as to the interference of the foreign Powers, and the respect and consideration shown to my father at Geneva were particularly gratifying to us: but the storm soon thickened both far and near. The 10th of August and the massacre of the Swiss Guards at Paris produced a general consternation in the Swiss cantons, and threw many families into mourning. In the month of September following, the French army under Montesquiou entered Savoy in defiance of all treaties and advanced within gunshot of the gates of Geneva. There were at this time a great number of French and Savoyard emigrants in the town, who were advised to remove without delay; and what with the number of Savoyards who fled before the French, and those who were hurrying away from Geneva to the Pays de Vaud, such a scene of bustle, dismay, and confusion as was then exhibited can hardly be conceived. Geneva was not secure from a *coup de main*, and contained a numerous party who were watching their opportunity. The magistrates therefore decided to place the town in a state of defence, and to call upon the cantons of Berne and Zürich for the assistance to which we were entitled by treaty. The Government of Berne had not been looking passively on. The approach of the French had excited hopes in the Pays de Vaud which it became necessary to check, and some thousand hardy and faithful high-

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*

landers from the German part of the canton were marched to the frontier to watch the French and the discontented Vaudois. One thousand of these troops and five hundred men from Zürich were ordered to Geneva, and in the meanwhile the town exhibited a scene of the greatest novelty and interest. The whole available population was armed: those that were already embodied in the town Militia wore their uniforms; those that were not, wore their military accoutrements over their plain clothes. A grand guard was mounted every day, the gates and outposts relieved, and all the people who were not on duty and could be spared from their trades and domestic occupations were employed in working on the ramparts. Such a scene had not occurred since the Massacre of St. Bartholomew on which occasion the town had been placed in a state of siege, and even the maidservants worked on the ramparts in the intervals of domestic labour! It was in the midst of these active preparations that the Swiss Confederates arrived. The French village of Versoix, situated on the Swiss side of the lake within five miles of Geneva, interrupted the direct communication with Switzerland. Our allies, therefore, embarked at Nion, in the Pays de Vaud. They were met by the fleet of the Republic, consisting of several large barges, armed with *caronades*, with flags flying and bands playing; and on their landing at the *Molard* (the port of Geneva), the air resounded with acclamations, the inhabitants crowding to the shore welcomed and embraced the Confederate troops and conducted them arm in arm to their quarters, singing patriotic songs all the way. I remember seeing many individuals of both sexes affected to tears. The old Swiss spirit seemed to have revived and to defy all aggression; and although more attentive observers might have discerned symptoms of weakness and irresolution in the Confederate councils, the intoxicating nature of patriotic and warlike feelings left



no room for reflection, and every heart glowed with the spirit of a John de Bubenbergh or an Arnold de Winkelried.

“Far other thoughts predominated in the minds of the base and revengeful Genevese who influenced the councils of France. Regardless of the independence of their country and of the ties of home, they had caused instructions to be given to Montesquiou to show no mercy at Geneva. Montesquiou was a gentleman and a man of letters, and his sympathies were all on the side of the little State that had given birth to Rousseau, Bonnet and De Saussure. When our deputies waited on him, he accordingly expressed the greatest abhorrence of the spirit by which Clavière and his Paris associates were actuated, and concluded in September 1792 a treaty by which the neutrality of Switzerland was recognised. This treaty was ratified at Paris, but excited so much resentment among the Girondists and Jacobins that Montesquiou sought a refuge from these implacable men among the happy people from whose country he had warded off the scourge of war. He abruptly left his camp and rode to Geneva, dressed in his plain clothes and attended by a single aide-de-camp, and after communicating with some members of the Government took boat, and in the evening of the same day reached Lausanne from whence he sent his resignation to Paris.

“Tranquillity and peace being thus apparently restored, the citizens returned to their several occupations and the Confederate troops left us. It was, however, obvious that the tide was turning. The French Revolution was at its height. Proselytism was the order of the day; and surrounded as we now were on every side by the French territory, hopes and fears changed sides; and the timid herd, always a large part of the flock, began to look to the Revolutionary party for protection.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*

Spied upon by the French diplomatic agents in Geneva, Mallet was too marked a man to be able to remain there after the departure of the Swiss troops. Embarking accordingly with the Bernese staff he proceeded to Lausanne, the capital of the Pays de Vaud, on a visit to his friend Baron d'Erlach de Spietz, Bailli of Lausanne, while his wife took up her residence in the house of one of her relations, a Madame de Montaqui in the same place.

"The Château de Lausanne and the Montaquis' house had nothing in common save their beautiful site. The château is an old baronial residence, with all the massive circumstances of feudal architecture; the aspect of the place was altogether gloomy and uninviting, and I cannot say that its moral atmosphere was calculated to dispel those feelings. The Baron d'Erlach was a proud, aristocratic person, extremely unpopular at Lausanne. He was the head of the elder branch of an ancient, noble and distinguished family; and the haughtiness of the oligarch was not softened by those domestic virtues which are often found to temper republican manners. His wife was a De Watville, another of the six noble families of Berne; but there was an expression of settled melancholy in her countenance which was, I fear, a true index to the feelings within. The Montaquis were the very reverse of all this: a Pays de Vaud gentleman in moderate circumstances, ill-educated, fond of his wife and his bottle, but a 'mere lodger in his own house,' and leaving his wife to regulate matters as she pleased. The whole family did not seem to have the semblance of a care, and such another spot of earth as that on which they lived can hardly be found on this side of Paradise. It had been the residence of Gibbon, and is well known as such: a stone house with only a basement storey and a first floor, consisting of well-

distributed apartments running parallel to and communicating by folding doors with a terrace in a south aspect, planted with lime trees, and commanding a prospect at once the most cheerful and lovely, and the most sublime, that can be conceived. From the terrace to the lake meadows and plantations and gardens in all the luxuriance of vegetation; then the deep blue water for about nine miles, bounded by the rocks of Meillerie and the receding Alps.

"On referring to my mother's letters to my father during his stay next year at Brussels, I am struck with many circumstances which show the degree of consideration he enjoyed at that time. Baron d'Erlach and other persons of consequence at Lausanne, both natives and foreigners, assiduously sought his correspondence; and copies of his letters were sent about all over the country. The greatest attentions were paid to my mother and sisters by every person of note; and the Sardinian minister, in consequence of some communication from my father interesting to his Court, made my mother a present of plate."<sup>1</sup>

With Baron d'Erlach therefore who, whatever his domestic qualities may have been, was at all events a resolute and public-spirited officer and a good friend Mallet du Pan remained for some months, occupied with attempts at the Court of Sardinia where he had formed close relations with Mr. Trevor, British minister at Turin, and in other quarters even at Coblenz itself,<sup>2</sup> to inspire a policy similar to that which he had preached at Frankfort. To this period belongs his first acquaintance with two frequent correspondents, the young Marquis de Sales, great-nephew of St. François de Sales, and Count

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*

<sup>2</sup> Descostes, *Révolution vue à l'étranger*, p. 275.



Joseph de Maistre, the latter of whom had written to him some months before asking his advice and assistance as to the publication of his first book. '*Qui vous a lu vous estime,*' were the first words of his letter, and their intercourse was agreeable to both men, though later events brought into relief the fundamental difference in their political points of view. "A great bigot in politics," is young Mallet's comment on their new friend, "but a most agreeable man."

It may be imagined that Mallet du Pan, whose momentary hopes had been dashed by the miserable fiasco of the Brunswick campaign, and who foresaw the inevitable result of revolutionary agitation in his own country, must have been looking for a settled home and occupation, and his thoughts seem to have turned to England where his friends Malouet and the Chevalier de Panat had taken refuge, and to Germany whence Montlosier was writing with offers of co-operation and assistance. But the execution of Louis XVI., with its challenge to the monarchs and peoples of the Continent which inaugurated a new war of principles against France, appealed irresistibly to his conscience as a publicist. Already in his last article in the *Mercur*e he had insisted on the need for common and public-spirited action among all who desired the restoration of order, and he felt that with his knowledge and perception of the tendencies of the Revolution he might as a simple individual do something to inspire an effectual resistance among the members of the coalition. At this moment, too, the French Princes, remembering perhaps his confidential position to their dead Brother and their own disregard of his advice, seem to have applied for his help, as they henceforth regularly did

whenever their own plans went most astray ; it was at all events a letter from Marshal de Castries proposing an interview that finally decided him to set out for Brussels. Before doing so he had addressed notes on the real character of the war and the revolutionary factions to the Kings of Prussia and Sardinia which were read and praised but which produced no visible effect, unless the agreement at this time between the latter and the British Government may be considered to have been in some measure the result of his information and advice.

These notes are interesting as the first of a long series of diplomatic memoranda which Mallet du Pan continued to furnish by request to the various Governments at war with France and which, varied by the occasional publication of a vigorous pamphlet, formed as we shall see his chief means of influence, and the source both of his reputation and of his support until his brief return to journalism at the close of his life.

For Brussels, then, Mallet set out in April and after some fruitless wanderings in search of Marshal de Castries, who was continually on the move with the Regent, reached that city in June 1793. It was then the centre of political and military activity, and full of diplomats and statesmen intent on the campaign which was about to open under the Prince of Coburg. '*Ce n'est plus la vie paisible du Château de Lausanne,*' he wrote to his wife (2nd July). He soon found himself in relation with the principal personages assembled there, and deep in visits, conferences, writings, and business of all sorts, he no longer regretted his failure to meet the French Princes, intercourse with whom

as he quickly discovered would have destroyed his chances of usefulness with the Ministers of the allies. Count de Mercy Argenteau, who was still all-powerful, and Baron de Breteuil found his assistance of such value that they earnestly pressed him to remain at headquarters until some issue had been reached, and he was constantly in communication with Lord Elgin, the British minister, dining with him twice a week. He also formed a friendship with another Englishman, Sir John Macpherson, through whom he was presented to the Archduke Charles, Governor of the Netherlands, to become celebrated later on as the one successful Austrian general. The Archduke received him with distinction and conversed with him on public affairs, an opportunity of which Mallet availed himself to speak with a frankness to which the Prince was not accustomed, but which he flattered himself did not give offence.<sup>1</sup> His letters expressed a natural satisfaction at the really remarkable welcome he there found for his ideas and counsels, and some hopefulness of a favourable termination of the struggle; while, as to his own future, he assured his wife that many avenues of useful and profitable employment were open to him. During these July days he made an expedition to witness the siege of Valenciennes, nineteen leagues away, visiting the camp and the trenches where he and his friends were regaled with cannon-balls, one of which passed him a few paces off through an opening in a battery, and he described his astonishment at the

<sup>1</sup> "Ce prince intéressant a le jugement d'un Allemand, la pénétration d'un Italien et l'élévation d'âme d'un Espagnol. On sait qu'il participe de ces trois natures, par son père et sa mère et par sa naissance et son éducation en Toscane" (*Notes*).



spectacle of a siege of that day, with the constant explosion of bombs, the *tintamarre* of the cannon, and the sight of the wounded men.

Towards the beginning of August he published, with the approval of the foreign representatives, a work which was to make a prodigious sensation, and which is still the best known of his writings, his *Considerations on the Revolution*.<sup>1</sup> The ideas and even much of the language of this pamphlet are familiar enough to students, but it must be remembered that few if any of those who read it in 1793 had any real notion of the character of the events which were taking place in France, or of their probable reaction on the other countries of Europe. Pitt himself said that before reading Mallet's pamphlet he had had no idea of the French Revolution.<sup>2</sup> With intuitive political sagacity, ripened by the study of events, Mallet du Pan had realised the essential conditions of the problem such as we know them to-day, while his contemporaries were still under the impression that the struggle against the Revolution was an ordinary international war to be conducted on the usual lines. In order to rouse Europe to a sense of the dangers of this course it was necessary to describe (a task which Mallet du Pan always performed with the hand of a master) the varying aims of the revolutionary factions, their contests,<sup>3</sup> and the emergence of the only one which could be properly termed a party, that '*fac-*

<sup>1</sup> *Considérations sur la nature de la Révolution de France et sur les causes qui en prolongent la durée*, Brussels, 1793. It had a large circulation in several editions, and was translated into English.

<sup>2</sup> See *Memoirs of Malouet*, vol. ii., p. 502.

<sup>3</sup> The phrase "à l'exemple de Saturne la Révolution dévore ses enfants" occurs in this pamphlet.

*tion atroce*’ whose objects were the establishment of the Republic, the absolute levelling of rank and fortunes, and the subversion of social order. He had to trace the steps by which, with the assistance of the *émigrés*<sup>1</sup> and the Brunswick manifesto, Jacobinism had become identified with militarism.<sup>2</sup> ‘*Il faut incendier les quatre coins de l’Europe,*’ Brissot had proclaimed, ‘*notre salut est là.*’ The threat was no empty one; the Revolution had become cosmopolitan,<sup>3</sup> and to meet such a movement it was necessary to appeal to the public

<sup>1</sup> The Révolution owes the horrible character it has assumed during the last year “à cette émigration systématique qui sépara le monarque de ses défenseurs, le royaume des royalistes, les propriétés des propriétaires, un parti de ses partisans, . . . à ce torrent de promesses et de menaces impuissantes répandues par d’aveugles écrivains, et qui, en fournissant aux Jacobins des prétextes de crimes et des instruments de domination, avaient usé le ressort de la crainte lorsque l’armée alliée se présenta sur les frontières, . . . au concours de l’émigration avec l’intervention des étrangers, . . . et à l’éclat des divisions qui partageaient les royalistes. Enfin cette guerre extérieure si désirée vint achever la révolution qu’elle devait anéantir.”

<sup>2</sup> “Peu de gens observent que par sa nature destructive la Révolution amène nécessairement la république militaire. Supprimer les ateliers, les chantiers, la navigation, la bourse et les métiers, c’est se créer une pépinière d’instruments de crimes au dedans, et de régiments pour le dehors. . . .

“La révolution et la guerre sont inséparables, elles ont une tige commune.”

<sup>3</sup> “Chaque Européen est aujourd’hui partie dans ce dernier combat de la civilisation, nous avons corps et biens sur le vaisseau entr’ouvert, or, à la veille du naufrage on ne peut—

Laisser la crainte au pilote,  
Et la manœuvre aux matelots.

Tout homme a le droit de montrer ses inquiétudes; la Révolution étant pour ainsi dire cosmopolite, elle cesse d’appartenir aux Français exclusivement.”

opinion of Europe ; to enlist in the cause of defence the moral weapons of the aggressor,<sup>1</sup> enthusiasm, self-interest, belief in the cause, single-minded concentration on the struggle ; to point out the objects of the Jacobin leaders,<sup>2</sup> the feebleness of the methods by which they had hitherto been opposed, and the inevitable and fatal results of half-hearted resistance on both France and Europe. Even more interesting is the recognition shown by the author of the underlying causes of revolution,<sup>3</sup> and his frank condemnation of plans of counter-revolution, "a phrase which prudence should have proscribed" and which had given more arms to the Republic than the tricolour cockade. Those ultra-Royalists who uttered the terrible cry, '*Tout ou Rien,*' had merely dictated a war-cry to their enemies,<sup>4</sup> for the Jacobin conquest, invasion of barbarism though it might be as he himself had portrayed it, was yet founded on the genuine and universal unpopularity of

<sup>1</sup> "D'abord on aperçoit qu'outre les instruments communs à toutes les Puissances, savoir : les canons, les soldats, et l'argent ou ce qui le représente, la Convention de Paris met à ses ordres . . . tous les prestiges de l'opinion, l'énergie de l'enthousiasme, les fascinations de la plume et de la parole, les passions qui ont le plus d'empire sur le cœur humain, etc."

<sup>2</sup> "De même que le Mammon du Paradis perdu a les yeux toujours fixés sur le parvis d'or de la demeure céleste, la Convention a ses griffes dressées sur les propriétés publiques et privées de l'étranger."

<sup>3</sup> "Une révolution est essentiellement un déplacement de pouvoir, lequel s'opère nécessairement toutes les fois que l'ancien pouvoir n'a plus de force de protéger la chose publique, ou le courage de se protéger lui-même."

<sup>4</sup> "Je proteste au nom de tous les vrais Royalistes contre une profession dont la publicité en France équivaldrait à la perte de deux batailles, immortaliserait la Révolution, et créerait aux Puissances plus de difficultés et de dangers que tous les clubs des tyrannicides."



the old monarchy, its agents and its accessories. These last were gone for ever, and many were the interests created by their fall which bound great classes of the population to resist their restoration. The Revolution had its roots in opinion and in sentiment, in the sufferings of the masses, in the growing inequality of conditions; it could not be met and combated by war alone (*'jamais des canons ne tuèrent des sentiments'*); without moral domination it had become impossible to govern men. The submission which alone was to be desired could spring only from force and persuasion united,<sup>1</sup> and those who aspired to crush the savage anarchy of the Revolution must take pains to disabuse the French people of the idea that the Powers were leagued together in the interests of despotism, and that, having brought about a counter-revolution by force, they would maintain it by the gallows and plunge again into slavery a nation already too much punished for having mistaken the nature of true freedom. If, he ventured to say, the cause of the allies was merely the cause of the Monarchs, as the actions and speeches of the Princes and *émigrés* too loudly proclaimed, the Revolution would indeed be indestructible.<sup>2</sup> If the revolutionary principle, was to be crushed it would be necessary to remember

<sup>1</sup> "Toutes les Révolutions offrent un mélange d'enthousiasme, de méchanceté et de faiblesse. L'art de les combattre consiste donc à subjuguier la méchanceté, à désenchanter l'enthousiasme, et à fournir une égide à la faiblesse."

Again: "Ah, lorsqu'on prétend à conduire les hommes il faut prendre la peine d'étudier le cœur humain, de diriger ses penchants, d'éclairer ses déterminations".

<sup>2</sup> "On a trop souvent et trop follement répété que c'était ici la cause des Rois; ce propos d'antichambre a passé de la bouche des courtisans dans celle des anarchistes."

that it was a conspiracy against the rights of nations even more than in favour of the rights of man, and that the elements of reaction and resistance to internal tyranny, which were surely gaining strength in France, could not be conciliated by a pedantic adherence to the worn-out formulæ of despotic royalism.

Such in the baldest outline were some of the points of this powerful appeal to the public opinion of the Continent, written with the '*fer rouge*' which, as its author said, was necessary to excite any sensation. A sensation it certainly did produce, '*un inconcevable vacarme*' as he described it, among the *émigré* society to whom his solemn, perhaps too harsh, warnings had been addressed, and whose attacks he had anticipated in an eloquent vindication of his right to speak in the interests of true royalism :—

"I have spoken more than once in their name," he had written, "and they have never disavowed me. Although a foreigner and a republican I have acquired the rights of a Royalist at the price of four years spent without any reasonable certainty on going to bed that I should awake to liberty or to life, of three arrests of my person, of one hundred and fifteen denunciations, of the seal twice put upon my papers, of four 'civic assaults' on my house, of the confiscation of all my property in France. Thus have I acquired the rights of a Royalist, and since nothing remains to be gained by that title but the guillotine, I imagine that no one will be tempted to dispute it with me."

"La cohue des émigrés," he tells his wife, "poussait des cris de fureur. Groupés au Parc, comme les Jacobins au Palais Royal, 2 ou 300 écervelés en collet ou en croix ne parlaient que de me pendre après la contre-révolution. . . . Cette nouvelle esclandre faillit les faire chasser tous. Depuis dix jours toutes

les sociétés sont aux prises sur ma misérable brochure. Les femmes disputent pour ou contre avec fureur. . . . Montlosier a été terrible ; sa chaude amitié l'a porté sur la brèche en toutes armes."

That the Princes, who had not been taken into confidence on the publication, shared the sentiments of their followers was shown by the uneasy inquiries of Marshal de Castries as to its tendency, and by Mallet's reply in which he defended his action and characterised in strong terms the " transports of men deranged by adversity, who had learnt from it no lessons, no ideas, no notion of anything ". Attacks and disapproval, however, he could face with equanimity in view of the favourable judgment of the statesmen and representatives of the Powers. The Archduke Charles summoned him to his court, where he received the solemn thanks of Mercy Argenteau and Metternich on behalf of their Governments ; and in London the book was eagerly read, Lord Elgin writing that he had had many conversations with Ministers about it and that Burke, in spite of his reactionary opinions, had rather to his surprise spoken of it with enthusiasm and described it as the best thing which had appeared on the Revolution.<sup>1</sup>

All personal preoccupations, however, were soon swallowed up by the painful interest of the campaign which had opened so brilliantly for the allies in the early spring by the victory of Neerwinden, the defec-

<sup>1</sup> Lord Lansdowne in a speech, 17th February 1794, read to the House of Lords several passages from the *Considerations* with the object of proving that in the opinion even of sensible aristocrats force alone could never deal with the Revolution. The use of this argument, however, as one in favour of making peace was not at all in accordance with the views of Mallet du Pan.



tion of Dumouriez, and the reconquest of Belgium by the Prince of Coburg, but which was to close in gloom with the first successes of Hoche on the Rhine and of Bonaparte at Toulon. "Everything is still uncertain," wrote Mallet on 20th August, "it is impossible to explain the conduct of the Prince of Coburg . . . a more active and enterprising leader is a necessity." The internal condition of France had offered a real chance of success to the allies. The decree of Fraternisation (15th December 1792) which changed the policy of France from one of mere propaganda to one of conquest, the execution of Louis XVI., and the organisation of a mighty engine of government in the committees of the Convention, had indeed given incalculable strength to the revolutionary movement by destroying all probability of compromise. But for many months the actual as apart from the potential strength of France was non-existent, the armies which were to overrun Europe were in embryo, and with the successive disgrace, recall or execution of Dumouriez, Custine, Biron, and Beauharnais, France was left for the moment without generals; while civil war had broken out in many parts of the country, in the Gironde, in Lyons, and in Marseilles. Both from Belgium and from the Rhine the march of the allied armies on Paris could, during the earlier months of the year, have met with no effective resistance, but their successes were confined to the siege and capture of Valenciennes and Mayence; all opportunities were lost, and by the end of the year the tide had decisively turned in favour of the revolutionary forces. From the beginning of the war Mallet du Pan had pointed out that two courses only were possible, either to penetrate into France by the first

breach, as Brunswick had tried to do in 1792, or to pursue a temporising policy by capturing the frontier fortresses, which was Coburg's plan in 1793. Neither course had been followed with intelligence and determination, and both failed. Coburg's policy could only have been successful had it been accompanied by measures to prevent the formation of organised hostile forces and to support the anti-revolutionary revolts in France. The suppression by the Convention of the movements in Lyons, in the Calvados, in Marseilles and in Bordeaux were events, as Mallet pointed out, more disastrous for the allies than would have been the loss of Valenciennes, Mayence and Belgium. But the military and political faults of the campaign were, after all, merely the symptom of more deep-seated evil. To the sovereigns and ministers of Europe, the character of the Revolution, the condition of France, even the cause of the French monarchy, were all considerations of minor importance compared with the separate selfish interests of the Powers; and the great coalition, undermined by intrigue and jealousy, was even then tottering to its fall. Its success had depended on the joint action of Austria and Prussia, and the two Powers were already hopelessly estranged. Their alliance had meant checkmate to Russia; and the Empress Catherine, by attacking Poland, threw down the apple of discord between them by tempting Prussia to claim her share. The Treaty of St. Petersburg (23rd January), which partitioned Poland between Russia and Prussia, drove Austria into antagonism, and thenceforward her principal efforts under Thugut, who became in March chief of the Austrian Foreign Office and to whom, as the Prussian historian has said, France

owes her victory in the revolutionary war and Austria her present position in Europe, were directed towards securing compensation for herself in Alsace and negotiating the exchange of Belgium for Bavaria. Renouncing the vigorous prosecution of the war by the aid of Prussia, herself intent on Polish intrigue, Austria turned to England, and sought to secure her adhesion to the Bavarian exchange by supporting the English view of the general character of the objects of the war, that of resistance to French encroachment without interference with French internal affairs.

Such were the secret plans and intrigues of the courts during Mallet's stay at Brussels. Towards the end of August he addressed a second note to Lords Grenville and Elgin, which the latter assured him had made a proper impression on Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville, pointing out that the failure to support the counter-revolutionary movement in France would certainly result in the consolidation of the Government of the Convention. Soon afterwards Mallet du Pan left Brussels and rejoined his family at Berne, where he had determined to settle availing himself of his rights as a *Combourgeois de Berne* of residence and protection in the Canton.

The chief work of Mallet du Pan's remaining years until his brief return to journalism at the close of his life was to be that of unofficial adviser or "consulting physician" to the various Governments at war with the Revolution. It will therefore be necessary to follow his opinions in the confidential diplomatic memoranda which he furnished to the British Cabinet through Lord Grenville, Lord Elgin, and Mr. Wickham; to Counts Colleredo and Mercy Argenteau, to the Duke



of Brunswick and the *émigré* Princes of France, to the Kings of Sardinia, Prussia and Spain ; and finally in a regular political correspondence which he was shortly asked to undertake for the Emperor Francis as well as for the Prussian and Portuguese courts. It was not a form of public activity which he would naturally have chosen for himself, for his experience as a negotiator had not been encouraging, the gift of expression which made him a power with the public was wasted upon officials, and he was wanting in the pliancy and suavity which are perhaps essential in diplomacy. Both from the point of view of his personal interests and his literary reputation, he would probably have done better to have availed himself, failing journalism, of some opportunity of private employment which would have left him leisure for studies on the history of his times. But though letters and journalism were his chosen vocation he was essentially a man of action, and the demand for assistance addressed to him from so many quarters was, for a man of his strongly political instincts, too imperious to be resisted.

The secret history of the period teems indeed with intrigue, and many were the agents and writers, worthy and unworthy,<sup>1</sup> who tendered their advice.

<sup>1</sup> The so-called Comte d'Entraigues whose notes figure in the last volume of the *Dropmore Papers* was one of the "Jacobins d'aristocratie" whose violence and intrigues were most harmful to the royal cause. Mallet, in a note for Louis XVIII., urged on one occasion the expulsion of the "nuée d'émissaires, de ministres ambulants, de cerveaux timbrés, de légats qui affluent partout, les uns avec des brevets de S.M., les autres avec les patentes de M. le Prince de Condé, les troisièmes avec des commissions britanniques, se croisant en tous les sens, racontant leurs missions aux tables d'hôte, et jetant

Mallet du Pan is honourably distinguished from most of these men whom he described as '*ces entrepreneurs de contre-révolution à deux cents francs par mois*'. It would be wrong to exaggerate the influence of a simple publicist in matters of high state policy, and no one was more conscious than he of the absurdity attaching to any such pretension, or of the futility of his own whole-hearted efforts to enforce a true view of the situation. "It would be ridiculous," he said, "for a man of sense to usurp the *rôle* of preceptor to Governments without being called upon to do so." But the fact remains that though his advice was not, perhaps could not, be followed it was eagerly sought, that his opinions recommended themselves to many of those best qualified at the time to judge of the situation to be confronted, and that they are now recognised as statesmanlike by the best students and historians of the epoch. He stood out among the secret agents of the time as a man who had taken an open, courageous and consistent line on the questions at issue, and his devoted efforts on behalf of Louis XVI. and that King's well-known sympathy with and confidence in his opinions—the Comte d'Artois on one occasion himself recalling '*combien il était opinioné par mon vertueux Frère*'—gave him authority with all sections of royalists. His visit to Brussels had made him acquainted with and trusted by many of the most influential statesmen of the coalition, and his pamphlet on the Revolution had for the first time given him a European celebrity. Above all, he happened to be a man of the character and intelligence

sur la cause royale une défaveur, une confusion, un mépris qui écartent absolument toutes les personnes raisonnables". The British Foreign Office naturally fell an easy prey to such adventurers.

which always carry weight, and especially in times of stress and crisis. But explain it as we may, it is a remarkable circumstance, and one probably without exact parallel, that a private person, a political writer belonging to a small neutral State and destitute of any powerful political connection, should have been enabled and encouraged to assume the position described.

No sooner was Mallet du Pan settled in his new home than he furnished at Lord Elgin's request two more lengthy reports, dated respectively in November 1793 and February 1794,<sup>1</sup> on the condition of France and the policy of the allies. In the first of these papers he traces the character and successive developments of the Revolution, he points out how the war itself had created in France (as he had in 1791 prophesied it would) a Government of such a nature that any idea of coming to terms with it was chimerical, and he discusses, in the spirit which now became habitual with him of resolute opposition to the timidity of half measures and compromises, the means by which alone it could be combated by the Powers. It is scarcely fanciful to trace, in the language used by Pitt and Grenville in defending the policy of the war against the eloquence of Sheridan, Fox and Lansdowne, during the memorable debates of the session of 1794, the arguments of this powerful memorandum.

The second paper, written at the moment of Robespierre's supremacy, is one of the most remark-

<sup>1</sup> These memoranda are printed almost *in extenso* by Sayous, and they have been brought to the notice of English readers in Mr. Oscar Browning's publication of Lord Gower's despatches (without an attribution to Mallet du Pan) and more recently in the third volume of the *Dropmore Papers*.



able historical fragments penned by Mallet du Pan. It is true, unfortunately for posterity, that he was not a personal witness of the Reign of Terror, that the "physician was not at his patient's side," nor had he as yet organised the machinery for supplying himself with information which served him so well in his accounts of the Directory ; but he declares his complete confidence in the accuracy of the communications upon which he relied, and to procure which he was authorised to spare no expense. The result is a piece of description such as a Foreign Office seldom has the pleasure to receive, and which can have left no excuse on the score of ignorance or illusion in the minds of the ministers who read it. Beginning with the machinery of the new Government, he shows how everything centred in the Committee of Public Safety which, with its thousands of agents and its system of denunciation, disposed despotically both of the armies and of the lives and property of the citizens ; which had reduced the Ministers to the position of its clerks, and the Convention to sanctioning its decisions as a '*machine à décrets*'. "Thanks to their knowledge of the human heart" these new tyrants had assumed the whole apparatus of despotism, carriages with six horses, body guards, sumptuous tables, actors and courtesans. Not satisfied with dazzling, they had struck terror into the people. No one save themselves might write or speak. There were 18,000 suspects in the prisons of Paris. The whole people was disarmed. In a masterly account of the finances, Mallet shows the immense resources which the committee had created for themselves, not only by the suppression of many great sources of ordinary expenditure, but also by the quadrupling of extraordinary revenues by means of the assignats

and the forced loan of one milliard, by the sale of the national domains many times repeated, by the maximum law, and by *réquisitions permanentes* such as the confiscation of the treasures of the churches, of gold and silver belonging to individuals, of the furniture of *émigrés*, of the spoils of revolted towns, and of the property of the four hundred persons guillotined every week, who were chosen as far as possible from among the wealthy or among those even of their own employees who had been allowed to enrich themselves. The Republic was in fact richer than all the sovereigns of the coalition put together. No less masterly is the analysis of the military forces of France and of the means by which fanatical hatred against the enemies of the Republic was stimulated by the dictators. No reliance could be placed on the supposed discontent of the army, nor on the fable that famine would bring the country to its knees. The Jacobins were openly advocating massacres to diminish the consumption of their nicely calculated supplies of food, and sooner than yield they would butcher their prisoners, their women and their old men, as useless mouths. Neither was there any hope of a re-awakening of public feeling in spite of the general detestation of the Convention, the Jacobins and the Committees. The great mass had no will of their own; "they are like the negro who strangles himself with his tongue sooner than complain". The Jacobin conquest was in fact the triumph of a minority. It has been attempted to estimate the numerical strength of the revolutionary mob in Paris, and the highest calculations have put it at 16,000 out of a population of 600,000 souls. Certain it is that at the election of Bailly's successor as Mayor of Paris, the Jacobin vote

of 6,600 out of a total of 80,000 voters was sufficient to carry the day, and subsequent municipal elections gave like results. The composition of the rank and file was even more insignificant than their numerical strength, and the analyses of the police have shown that the number of the *enragés* was swelled by domestic servants, the lowest class of workmen, and the residuum of the population; beggars living from hand to mouth, and adventurers from all parts of France and Europe. The abolition of the property qualification on the 10th of August 1792 gave them complete mastery of the forty-eight sections of Paris, the assemblies which were the chief means of carrying out the orders issued by the clubs and committees of the Jacobin leaders. These assemblies were attended by the bravos of every quarter, the meetings were held at night to keep away respectable citizens, and those who attended were treated with personal violence, the Jacobins in default of other arms breaking up the furniture and carrying their resolutions by force. The indifference of the middle classes, intensely conservative as they have always been, was even exceeded by their timidity. With the Reign of Terror the craven majority had sunk into a still deeper apathy :—

“The patience,” wrote Mallet du Pan a year later,<sup>1</sup> “with which the French have for fifteen months tolerated a system of imprisonment *en masse* and the judicial assassination of hundreds by wholesale, convicts the nation of a moral turpitude which renders them fit subjects for any kind of oppression. In all that long period of murder not a son dared to avenge the execution of his father, not a husband ventured to

<sup>1</sup> On 29th April 1795, *Correspondence for Vienna*, i., 188.



defend his wife, not a father to rescue his child, in a country where swords would once have leapt from their scabbards for the sake of a mistress or an epigram."

The most vivid pages of the report to Lord Elgin are those which describe with all the power inspired by the writer's inborn loathing for iniquity the eleven members (one place was vacant) of the Committee of Public Safety. The worst of them was the ex-actor Collot d'Herbois, the image of an oriental tyrant with all the qualities of the Tiberius of Tacitus. The monster who had massacred four thousand citizens in five weeks is painted with his impassive ferocity, his profound dissimulation, his theatrical declamations, his ambition, his cupidity, his jealousy, in terms which make the reader shudder. His was the atrocious utterance when ordering to instant execution a young man just proved innocent of the offence with which he was charged: "If we spare the innocent too many guilty ones will escape". The estimate of Robespierre, however, the scape-goat of the Revolution as Bonaparte called him, is perhaps of more general interest:—

"He has never been and will never be capable of sustaining the stupendous part he has undertaken; sombre, suspicious, distrusting his best friends, fanatical, vindictive and implacable, his life is the image of that of Pygmalion, King of Tyre, such as Fénelon depicted him. To-day he is haggard, with hollow eyes and livid face, with restless and savage looks, and a countenance bearing the impress of crime and remorse. Tormented with terror he is always escorted by three chosen *sans-culottes* armed to the teeth who accompany him in his carriage; returning to his beggarly abode he shuts himself and barricades himself within it, and opens the door only with the most extreme precautions. If he

dines out it is never without laying his two pistols on the table one on each side of his plate, no servant may stand behind his chair, he partakes of no dish without one of the guests having eaten of it before him, he casts troubled and suspicious glances on all around him. . . . The simplicity of his tastes, his abstinence, his distaste for pleasure, and the well-founded opinion of his disinterestedness, have made and maintain his popular favour. He has not an *écu*, and his incorruptibility is in striking contrast with the rapacity of his colleagues. Living on his salary as a deputy he saves from his domestic expenditure in order to maintain a shabby carriage which he thinks necessary for his safety, and which in order to avoid the appearance of luxury he has had numbered like a public conveyance."

As for the accusation of aspiring to a dictatorship, Robespierre aspired to remaining master less from ambition than from fear. "Fear is the foundation and mainspring of his character." His power was in the tyranny of the Committee which, with its unlimited power over their lives and fortunes, froze with terror the hearts of the citizens. Robespierre, too, could answer a mother pleading for the life of her son after listening to her with face of iron: "Citoyenne, I have the power to punish, but I know not how to pardon". But he was hardly the "tiger drunk with blood," the monster beyond the pale of humanity, so often described; his cruelty sprang from the desire of domination, and that desire from the knowledge that his fall meant death. It was indeed to preserve their lives, and as a secondary motive to preserve their empire, that Robespierre and his committee grasped at omnipotence. One day in the autumn of 1793 Danton and Robespierre were consulted by a woman of their

acquaintance on a plan she had formed for leaving the country. "Fly at once," they told her, "we would we could follow you. It will not be long before we are butchering one another and France will be a torrent of blood."<sup>1</sup> The allies were warned that they must not count on the weakness of these terrible foes. Warring indeed among themselves they were united

<sup>1</sup> The following is an account from the private note-book of the execution of Marie Antoinette; according to Mallet du Pan's information, repeated also in another place, she was already dead before the guillotine fell. After describing the preparations he writes: "Cette infortunée Princesse soutint cet horrible appareil et la traversée immense avec sérénité, regardant la foule avec indifférence. Mais arrivée au bout de la Rue Royale, lorsqu'elle aperçut la Place de la Révolution, la foule, l'échaffaud; le souvenir de son mariage ou celui de la mort du Roi l'a opprimé (?) de saisissement. L'opinion générale est qu'elle expira. Arrivée à la guillotine, les bourreaux furent obligés de la prendre et de la porter sur le banc, elle n'avait plus de sentiment. L'un des bourreaux dit même à quelques scélérats qui lui reprochaient de la porter: *Eh ne voyez-vous pas qu'elle a déjà passé?*" Those who remember David's terrible and moving sketch of the Queen seated in the tumbril will have no difficulty in believing this story.

"Personne n'est mort," he writes, "avec plus de fermeté, de grandeur d'âme, de fierté que le duc d'Orléans; il redevint prince du sang. Lorsqu'on lui demanda, au tribunal révolutionnaire, s'il n'avait rien à dire pour sa défense, il répondit: 'Mourir aujourd'hui plutôt que demain, délibérez là-dessus.' Cela fut accordé. . . ."

The following story illustrates the gaiety with which some met their fate. The Chevalier du Barry, led out to the guillotine, remarked to his fellow victims with a laugh, "Le bourreau sera bien attrapé lorsqu'il viendra me prendre par les cheveux, car mon toupet lui restera à la main! . . . Jamais Biron ne fut plus beau que sur la charrette. . . ." Custine on the other hand "se défendit avec talent et mourut en enfant," while Hérault de Séchelles, sure that he would not escape, went every day for six weeks to witness the executions in order to familiarise himself with the idea!



by the most powerful of all motives, fear of their enemies within and without. Their lives depended on their supremacy, and this again depended on their success in prosecuting the war, in keeping the generals and their troops at a distance from the scene of the struggle of factions, and in supporting them by the devastation of adjoining countries.

Mallet du Pan's description of the internal condition of France was doubtless accepted as authentic. But his counsels as to combating the designs of the Convention fell upon deaf ears. He had repeated them, as he said, till they had become commonplaces, and if the lessons of history and of recent experience had taught nothing to the generals and ministers of the coalition, the phrases of an obscure adviser could not be expected to influence them. When he appealed for a common sentiment of passionate resistance to an anti-national and anti-social propaganda as the only force which could meet and overthrow it, he showed indeed true insight into the problem. But he was appealing to a sentiment which was not called into existence on the Continent till fifteen years of humiliation and disaster had passed over Europe. When he pointed out that the despotism of the Committee, while it supplied for the moment an unnatural strength to the French onslaught, yet carried within it the seed of dissolution; when he showed how the active intervention of the immense number of French exiles of all classes which had been a grave mistake in 1792 might now, if properly directed, rally the bulk of the nation against the Jacobin rule and how fatal was the neglect to support the revolts in La Vendée and the great cities of the South, he was only insisting on the essential

facts of the situation. But he was assuming what was far from being the case, that the interest and desire of the allied statesmen were to terminate the Revolution by the re-establishment of order in France. The same remark is true of his repeated advice to the Powers, and their studied neglect of it, to renounce their terms of absolutism and their exclusive patronage of the Princes and rebels, to abandon their talk of the *ancien régime*, of the orders, of systems of government, and to dwell instead on the interests and misfortunes of the French nation as a whole. It was fruitless to preach concerted military measures to Powers, each bent, so far as they were seriously bent on the war at all, on securing territorial compensation for itself rather than on combating the Revolution.<sup>1</sup> But the truth was that by this time their increasing preoccupation with Eastern affairs, the designs of Catherine on Constantinople, the revolt in Poland and the impending fresh partition of that country, and the consequent estrangement between Prussia and Austria, had taken all heart out of the war with France; and that England alone, when other Powers were longing for the end, England which had entered with reluctance on the war, was at last beginning to realise its true character. But England had no resources with which to conduct a continental campaign; she could act only by means of exhortations and subsidies, and events moved too quickly for her parliamentary and diplomatic methods. For France had at last found leaders in war with

<sup>1</sup> "Quant à moi, milord, je n'hésite pas à vous avouer que dans cette position où vous combattiez la France et *subsidièrement* la Révolution vous manqueriez la Révolution et la France." (To Lord Elgin.)

Carnot at headquarters and Pichegru, Jourdan and Moreau at the front, and 1794 was to repeat on a greater scale the disasters of 1793. The close of this year, which witnessed the fall of Robespierre and of the Committee of Public Safety (Thermidor 9, 1794), left France satiated with and exhausted by triumphs greater than any which had crowned her arms under the old monarchy, and Europe in a situation which justified the darkest apprehensions for her future.

Not only were the French delivered from all danger of foreign invasion, but Holland and Belgium had fallen into the hands of France; Sweden, Tuscany, and Sardinia had already treated with the Republic; Spain and Prussia were about to be added to the list of neutral Powers, and the most important German State, after Austria, had already betrayed the Empire and agreed to the cession of the left bank of the Rhine at the general peace. The whole course of the French war up to the final partition of Poland in 1795 was governed by the vicissitudes of intrigue in the East, and the result was to leave the field clear for the machinations of the only great potentates of Europe, Catherine of Russia and the Jacobin Government of France. Well might Burke exclaim, in criticising the selfish policy of the allies, that there could be no honour in a society for pillage!



## CHAPTER VI.

FROM THERMIDOR TO VENDÉMIAIRE—LIFE AT BERNE  
—MALLET'S FRIENDS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

1794-1795.

IT was at this moment<sup>1</sup> that Mallet du Pan, addressing the Emperor Francis in words which read almost like a satire on the motives of German statesmanship, as the "pillar of social order, the most solid support at this crisis of religion, of civil authority and of the common weal," sought to oppose the conclusion of a premature and dangerous peace by pointing out that the recognition of the Republic would reanimate the waning authority of the Jacobins in France, that it would morally dethrone the governments of the coalition, and be a patent of insurrection to the peoples.

The words just quoted are taken from the opening sentences of a regular political correspondence<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 28th December 1794.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondance inédite de Mallet du Pan avec la cour de Vienne* (1794-98), publiée d'après les Manuscrits conservés aux Archives de Vienne, par André Michel; avec une Préface de M. Taine, in 2 vols., Paris, 1884. This correspondence consists of 136 letters, addressed week by week directly to the Emperor Francis from 28th December 1794 to 26th February 1798. It was paid for and was, writes Mallet du Pan's son, with the similar series of letters for the Portuguese minister at Turin and the court of Berlin, "our sole

which Mallet du Pan had been requested to undertake for the court of Vienna, and which formed during the ensuing four years his principal occupation. At the same time Baron Hardenberg<sup>1</sup> and M. de Souza Cotinho<sup>2</sup> applied on behalf of their sovereigns, the

dependence; yet to my father's honour, be it said, it is distinguished throughout by that fearlessness of opinion and manly tone which characterises his public writings."

<sup>1</sup> "On the occasion of the peace concluded at Bâle between France and Prussia, in 1791, he felt much offended with Baron Hardenberg, who had expressed a uniform acquiescence in his opinions, and yet concluded the treaty of Bâle without the least intimation to my father of any change in his own views and policy. My father wrote him a dignified letter, breaking off their correspondence, which was, however, subsequently renewed at the earnest and pressing solicitation of the minister himself, and their mutual friend, General Heymann" (*Reminiscences*). This correspondence exists in the archives of Berlin, but has never been published.

<sup>2</sup> "Don Roderigo de Souza Cotinho Count of Linharès, the Maecenas of botany and indeed of general science at this period, was the Portuguese minister at Turin. At his table was a weekly assembly of literary men, in whose conversation and pursuits he bore a very intelligent part, always making himself completely one of the company by his knowledge and enthusiasm no less than by his enlivening affability. Mr. T. H. Jackson, son of the musical composer, who was then our *chargé d'affaires* at Turin, and a clever man himself, says in a letter to his father, of 21st March, 1787, in speaking of M. de Souza, 'besides being a man of the first rank in his own country, he is one of the best informed and most learned men I ever met anywhere'" (*Reminiscences*). This correspondence remains in the Lisbon archives. M. François Descostes recently discovered in the Château de Sales near Annécý, the seat of the descendants of the Marquis de Sales Mallet du Pan's friend and correspondent, copies of the earlier portion of it which was addressed to Turin (from December 1796 it was addressed to Souza Cotinho at Lisbon); and published the letters in an interesting but somewhat discursive volume entitled *La Révolution Française vue de l'étranger* (Tours: A.

Kings of Prussia and Portugal, for a similar correspondence. He gladly embraced these offers. His previous experience had well fitted him for the post of "minister *in partibus*" to the threatened Monarchies. He had already, as we have seen, been much consulted by the leading ministers of the allied Powers. His means of information had always been exceptionally great. The organisation of the "Intelligence Department," which, as we have seen, he had formed in France during his editorship of the *Mercure*, he had kept up on leaving France in 1792; he was now able to extend it by funds specially provided for the purpose, and internal evidence reveals the nature of his sources of information.<sup>1</sup> Letters of the Baron de Staël, of Barthélemy, of other influential personages (the chief of the staff of Hoche, for instance), are put into his hands; he sends to Lyons a trustworthy person to verify his information upon the state of the town; he receives textual accounts of the secret deliberations of Sieyès, Tallien and Barras; his correspondents are drawn from the committees of the Convention and the councils of the Directory, from the public offices, from the general staffs of armies of the Republic and of the Vendean rebels. His statements as to the condition of Paris were verified in many cases by M. Taine's researches into the documentary sources of the history, which led that writer to express the

Mame et fils, 1897), with a most appreciative introductory notice of Mallet du Pan. This correspondence, being addressed to a minister and not directly to a sovereign, is distinguished by even greater vivacity and freedom of expression than the Vienna correspondence.

<sup>1</sup> M. Michel in his excellent Introduction to the *Vienna Correspondence* has fully described these sources of information.



strongest opinion as to the general accuracy and fidelity of the information upon which Mallet du Pan relied.

The work is therefore of peculiar importance, not only as a record of Mallet du Pan's opinions and political action, but for the history of the time, addressed as it is to the sovereign of the only Continental State still at war with the Republic.

Mallet du Pan's warnings against the conclusion of peace at this moment were founded not indeed on the utility of foreign intervention as hitherto conducted, but on his knowledge of the internal condition of France to the study of which he set himself with renewed energy, and upon the proper handling of which everything in his opinion now depended. For the reaction of Thermidor had given rise to the one really popular movement of the later Revolution. The organisation of the body known to history, though not to contemporary politics, as the *Jeunesse Dorée*, had served as a rallying point for the rising royalist feeling. Recruited from the middle classes, they were composed of students and lawyers' clerks, of the sons of bankers, officials and shopkeepers. With hats, cravats and knee-breeches to distinguish them from the *sans-culottes*, or trousered, Jacobins, with hair arranged in pigtail or dressed *à la victime* jagged and short behind and long at the sides, and armed with large knobbed sticks, they assembled in the *cafés* of the Palais Royal, organised a regular opposition to the Jacobins, attacked their clubs, hunted down the *buveurs de sang*, destroyed the busts of Marat, and attended the theatre to sing the '*Réveil du Peuple*,' to hiss the '*Marseillaise*,' or cheer ironically at the refrain, '*Tremblez, tyrants et vous perfides*'. That but a small minority

were the weak dandies portrayed by Thiers, whose eccentricity earned for them from their enemies the names of 'Incroyables,' 'Elégants,' and 'Muscadins,' is proved by the heroic resistance they offered to the efforts of the rump of the Convention to perpetuate its power by the decrees of the 22nd of August 1795. They at all events represented a serious but unorganised body of opinion in the country, which was also beginning to find voice in the press. "The freedom of the press," Mallet wrote,<sup>1</sup> "produced the Revolution; the freedom of the press will destroy it by revolting, as it is doing every day, against its own work." He records the first signs of reaction in the Convention itself, the petitions demanding the restoration of public worship and the abolition of the Republican calendar; but much remained to be done. A third of France, he said, in the early months of 1795 was perhaps in favour of a monarchy, but the Royalists proper had not recovered from the terror which had plunged the whole kingdom into lethargy.<sup>2</sup> Those who adhered to the constitution of 1791 were as helpless and leaderless as the aristocrats. All had become accustomed to look upon the return of a king as a mere castle in Spain, and it was but a step from this sentiment to an inclination for the first order of things which promised security and peace. It was a condition, he pointed out to his royalist friends, almost equally favourable to the permanent establishment of a republic or to a restoration of the monarchy.<sup>3</sup> Nor did

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence for Vienna*, letter of 16th August 1795.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, letters of 8th and 18th February 1795.

<sup>3</sup> The people, he wrote, are as far as ever from rising to re-establish the Monarchy. "C'est un animal pareil à ces femmes

he fail to draw attention to the character of the men who still ruled the destinies of the country. Sieyès, for instance, who had "lived" through the Terror, emerged in May 1795 as president of the Convention, and he alone, by reason of his "intrigues, his metaphysical babble, his personal fears of the restoration of a king, his philosophic vanity and ambition, was a sufficient make-weight against the inclination of the majority of his colleagues to abandon all idea of a republic". With him were the authors of the *Coup d'État* of Thermidor, Jacobins without principle or convictions whether republican or monarchical, '*hommes perdus*,' Fréron, Legendre, Chénier l'aîné, Merlin de Thionville, Lecointre, Barras, Bourdon de l'Oise, and head of the band, the infamous Tallien. Once recovered from their surprise at the violence of the reaction of

publiques qui s'attachent d'autant plus à leur amant qu'elles en reçoivent plus de coups, parce qu'en échange de ses maux il jouit d'une liberté de dérèglement qui lui tient lieu du reste. A défaut de pain la populace vit de vieux harengs, d'œufs durcis, de salade au mauvais beurre, ce qui avec deux onces de pain et autant de riz qu'on distribue journellement, l'empêche de mourir de faim. Les spectacles, les cabarets, les promenades sont remplis. *Avec la diète*, dit la multitude, *nous atteindrons la moisson, et alors nous serons sauvés. Nous mangerons plutôt des pierres que de nous soumettre.* Tel est le langage des charretiers, des forgeons, des garçons cordonniers, imprimeurs, femmes, canaille en général. Ces gens sont toujours fanatiques, régicides, jacobins. Rappelez-vous le siège de Paris au temps de la Ligue; on y mangeait des rats et on criait, *à bas les Béarnais!* . . . ne comptez sur aucune guerre civile, c'est une vision d'émigrés. Les guerres n'ont lieu que de prince à prince, de prétendant à prétendant . . . mais où règne l'anarchie populaire il n'y a que des insurrections, des brigandages, des tueries, des 2 septembre. Le fanatisme, la stupeur, la bêtise, et la faiblesse, voilà l'état le plus général de la France" (*Turin Correspondence*, Descostes, p. 372).



public opinion, the unexpected result of their victory over the Mountain, these men devoted all their energies to maintaining their ascendancy, attempting at first to pose as leaders of the reaction and then, finding that their past crimes made them detested by the *Jeunesse*, falling back on the Mountain. Their tactics during the first months after Thermidor did much to provoke and stimulate the reaction and increase the chances of the Royalists, which seemed to grow greater till they culminated in the failure of the formidable terrorist *émeute* of the 1st of Prairial, energetically repressed by the Convention where a monarchical party had taken shape. For the first time since the 10th of August, the opinion of the majority had asserted itself, and the party of order had gained the upper hand. "The criminal and sanguinary Revolution," Mallet wrote, "is over, the philosophic Revolution alone remains." The restoration which thus came into sight in the summer of 1795 was not that of which the royalist exiles still dreamed. The Revolution, "which like the Reformation was a revolution of principles," had raised up interests so numerous and powerful as to make a complete restoration as impossible as it was undesirable. "It is," wrote Mallet to De Pradt, "as impossible to reconstruct the *ancien régime* as it would be to build St. Peter's with the dust from the roads". It was a return to the constitution of 1791, of whose faults he had been the most unsparing critic, which he now thought alone possible. That constitution offered the advantage of a system already known and consecrated by law and usage. Its fatal weakness, the powerlessness to which it had reduced the executive in the person of the King, might he thought be remedied so as to give some hope

of stability to a constitutional government. Mallet du Pan, as we know,<sup>1</sup> would have provided safeguards in a new constitution of the most stringent kind, for experience had taught him to value only such liberty as was compatible with public order and with the national character. But speculations as to the best kind of monarchy for France were beside the mark. "*Il s'agit de décider d'abord non quelle monarchie on aura, mais si l'on aura une monarchie.*" One point only was clear. If the Republic, which was nothing but a permanent and perpetual revolution, was to be brought to an end, there must be an absolute repudiation of any design to reinstate the rotten autocracy of 1789.

Such was the general situation which seemed to promise a term to the woes under which France and Europe had so long suffered. But the reactionary elements in France were too destitute of organisation to act without intelligent direction from their natural leaders, that assistance was as usual wanting, and a succession of disastrous blunders on the part of the allies, the Princes, and the leaders of the movement in Paris, soon dealt the death-blow to the hopes in which Mallet du Pan had begun to indulge when he wrote to De Pradt (April 1795) that he was being "daily pressed to return to Paris, and that another turn of the wheel would take him there". The peace of Bâle, the death of the Dauphin, and the Quiberon expedition followed each other in quick succession. The signature of the treaty with Prussia (5th April) destroyed the one powerful lever in the hands of the Powers, the desire of the French people

<sup>1</sup> See *Lettres de Mallet du Pan à Saladin Egerton*, p. 25.

for peace ; and saved the Convention by enabling it to gratify this craving and to hold out hopes of a general pacification. Mallet's indignation at this betrayal, by which Prussia sacrificed four solemn treaties and preferred an alliance with the assassins of Louis XVI., knew no bounds. The most horrid Jacobin, he wrote to Turin,<sup>1</sup> could not have rendered a more signal service to the Revolution than Baron Hardenberg. If only the Prussian Cabinet had temporised a few weeks longer, and the allies had held together refusing to treat with the Jacobins, the position of that faction would have become impossible. Then came the death of the young prince called Louis XVII. Mallet had followed the persecution of the unfortunate boy in his reports to Turin and Vienna, and in a letter to the latter Court<sup>2</sup> he gave details of the treatment of the

<sup>1</sup> Descostes, p. 334.

<sup>2</sup> " Pendant un an entier le jeune Roi a couché sur un grabat qui ne fut jamais remué, lui-même n'en avait pas la force : cet infortuné était obligé de se coucher comme un pauvre animal sur ce lit infect et putride. Madame plus avancée balayait lui-même sa chambre, la nettoyait et veillait à la propreté.

" Dans leur chambre respective, on avait pratiqué un tour où on leur apportait à manger ; à peine leur délivrait-on à quoi soutenir leur existence ; ils étaient obligés de remettre eux-mêmes les plats de la veille dans le tour. Les barbaries les plus raffinées se succédaient chaque jour. . . . On forçait les deux enfants de se coucher à la nuit ; jamais on ne leur a donné de chandelle. Deux brigands veillaient jour et nuit autour de la chambre du Roi ; dès qu'il était plongé dans le premier sommeil, un de ces Cerbères lui criait d'une voix effroyable : *Capet, où es-tu ? dors-tu ?*—*Me voilà* répondait l'enfant, moitié endormi et tout tremblant. Aussitôt le garde l'obligeait de sortir du lit, d'accourir nu et suant pour se montrer. Trois heures après, l'autre brigand répétait la même scène" (*Correspondence for Vienna*, i., 241-2).



two children of Louis XVI. in the Temple after the execution of the Queen and of Madame Elizabeth of the most harrowing description, the recital of which can hardly have gratified the Emperor. His death on the 8th of June 1794, aged ten years and two months, murdered as certainly as if he had shared his father's scaffold, drew from Mallet some words of manly indignation. "Not one of the Powers had deigned to interest itself in the pitiable lot of this family, to claim for them some consideration or even to inform itself of their fate! And it is with the men who have inflicted these horrors on the descendants of fifty kings, related to most of the crowned heads of Europe, *que l'on traite, que l'on fraternise, que l'on signe des traités de paix!*"<sup>1</sup> The event was a great blow to the royalist movement in France. It removed the rallying point of the Royalists to a foreign and hostile country, to a Prince whom Mallet almost insultingly described to the Emperor as the '*Roi des Émigrés*'. It was a calamity, he said in his uncompromising fashion in reply to a question from the Princes, which had postponed the restoration and made possible the *rapprochement* between the Republicans and the Constitutionalists, for "his Majesty did not count as regent, he is dreaded as King". It was a calamity which Louis XVIII. pro-

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence for Turin*, Descostes, p. 378. Mallet du Pan thus described the callous attitude of the *corps diplomatique*: "Le jour même de la mort du roi, le Comte Carletti a donné une conversation somptueuse à la campagne à deux cents députés, à leurs catins, aux intrigants les plus pervers et à toute la canaille du beau monde républicain. M<sup>me</sup> Tallien étant la divinité du jour, M<sup>me</sup> de Staël a prodigué les hommages les plus vils. Voilà où l'on est à la fin du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle! (*Correspondence for Turin*, Descostes, p. 377).

ceeded to make irreparable by issuing from Verona the Declaration (of 24th June) affirming the necessity of a simple return to the ancient constitution of France, which showed how completely exile had caused a clever man to lose touch with public opinion, and which served, in Mallet du Pan's words, only to "divide, to irritate, to chill".

This time nevertheless the Princes had made apparently serious advances to Mallet du Pan, and had despatched Count François de Sainte-Aldegonde, a gentleman attached to D'Artois, to confer with him at Schaffhausen on a number of questions to which they desired answers. These he gave, having previously summed up his views in two notes to "the King"<sup>1</sup> in which he fully described the state of opinion in France, sketched out the line of action which commended itself to him, and impressed upon his Majesty in respectful but forcible terms that what the monarchists in Paris above all things required was the "moral resurrection of the King," and an appeal from him to the nation opening communications with the moderate elements in the country. Action was imperatively demanded, and action through reputable and trusted agents.

These counsels proved, as Mallet du Pan had doubtless anticipated, wholly unacceptable to the Princes, and Louis distrusting a man *à système moderne*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dated 3rd and 10th July 1795. *Sayous*, ii., 151-169.

<sup>2</sup> In 1799 he replied to a suggestion by the Comte de Saint-Priest to employ Mallet du Pan in writing a fresh Declaration as follows: "L'idée d'employer la plume de Mallet du Pan est très bonne . . . mais en connaissant le mérite de cet écrivain, je connais aussi ses défauts: tant qu'il ne s'agit que d'attaquer les vices de qui est fait son style clair, sa logique serrée portent la conviction dans l'esprit

never again made a pretence of deferring to his opinion. D'Artois indeed continued from time to time, notably in London four years later, to solicit his advice, and it is curious that the future Charles X. should thus have appeared more liberal than Louis XVIII. More accessible and more courteous he certainly was, and the preference of the Duke of Wellington for the younger brother is only one instance of the superior popularity he always enjoyed with those who came in contact with him. But at every crisis of his life, from his desertion of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette to his desertion of the Duc de Richelieu in 1821, he showed himself, as he was, unprincipled and faithless, and his occasional overtures to Mallet du Pan merely proved that he was not above intriguing with constitutionalism with a view to securing adherents in case his brother's more uncompromising policy made him impossible. Louis' attitude is more difficult to account for. He was a man of broader mind and, as he showed on several occasions in later life, of much more acute political perception than D'Artois; he was capable of learning from experience, for the author of the Declaration of St. Ouen was a wiser man than the author of the Declaration of Verona. But it was long

de ses lecteurs, mais lorsqu'il s'agit du futur, *l'homme à système moderne se fait apercevoir, et il nuit plus qu'il ne sert.* Il lui faut donc un régulateur et plutôt trop ferme que pas assez; car entre les mains d'un homme qui abonderait dans son sens, il aurait les plus grands inconvénients, et tels *que je préférerais son silence à ses services.*" Louis, fortified by De Maistre, still adhered to the terms of the Declaration of Verona. (From the letters and instructions of Louis XVIII. to Saint-Priest, quoted by M. Thureau-Dangin, *Royalistes et Républicains*, p. 121.)



before he showed any spirit of concession to popular ideas or any consciousness that the France of 1789 was gone for ever, and meanwhile the opportunity of setting a term to the progress of revolution had passed never to return. That a Prince of some power of thought and experience, but entirely wanting in the qualities of initiative and action, was unable to shake off the influences of an absolutist court and the miserable tradition of an *émigré* regency may be explained without attaching undue importance to pettier motives. But Louis XVIII. was a *bel esprit*, and it is probable that offended vanity may have had something to do with the withdrawal of his confidence from a too free-spoken and republican adviser. It is impossible to affirm that Mallet du Pan's character possessed any of the qualities likely to propitiate a pretender who found his consolations in the incense of flatterers, in the belief in his divine right, and in the ceremonial of a mock court. Mallet du Pan had reasoned himself into royalism, but he never came near legitimism. A man who could have stooped to seek opportunities of access, to mingle with his counsels some discreet adulation and to applaud the royal epigrams, might conceivably have obtained a useful influence and weaned the monarch from his parasites. But the failure of the moderate members of Louis' own court to alter his views probably shows he was not at this time to be shaken by arts or arguments however adroit. "Toleration as regards individuals, intolerance as regards principles," was the maxim which Louis XVIII. had announced in his ably written letter to Mounier, a maxim not unnaturally inspired by the recollection of the disastrous failure

of his Brother's unresisting compliance with popular demands. If he sought Mallet's advice, it was doubtless with the wish to obtain the moral support of a man who had stood high in the confidence of Louis XVI., and whose pen had gained him the ear of the public and of continental statesmen ; but with no intention to follow it if it did not coincide with his own preconceived opinion.

Mallet du Pan then failed to influence the new court, but he failed in company with all the wisest advisers of the Princes. The Prince de Poix, who, on the 10th of August, had covered Louis XVI. with his body in the Tuileries and who had lost his father and mother on the guillotine, was disgraced and exiled from Verona ; and De Castries and Sainte-Aldegonde who were in complete agreement with Mallet wrote to him full of sympathetic despair at the attitude of their royal masters. The royal confidence was given instead to men like Montgaillard and D'Entraigues, the two most consummate liars, as Mallet described them, to be found in France, and the latter of whom gloried in the title of the Marat of the counter-revolution, and was so good as to write that he doubted whether Mallet du Pan was *entirely* devoted to the Jacobins. Emissaries and writers such as these, encouraged by the patronage of D'Artois and Condé, vied with each other in sanguinary attacks on the constitutional Royalists whose aid was indispensable to any serious enterprise.<sup>1</sup> The impression made by these incendiaries in Paris may be imagined ; every one

<sup>1</sup> "Lafayette is classed with Jourdan Coupe-Tête, Cazalès with Talleyrand, Malouet beneath Robespierre, Mallet du Pan lower than Gorsas, Carra, or Brissot !" (Thureau-Dangin.)

was soon saying that no hesitation was possible between the Republicans and enemies so implacable, and Mallet's comment is no more than was justified when he wrote to his friend,

*"Stultorum magister est eventus."* These gentlemen may make themselves quite easy about the description of the monarchy to be established in France, for there will be no monarchy at all. The last Stuarts reasoned and conducted themselves as they reason and conduct themselves abroad ; their end will be the same."

The failure of the miserably conceived and executed descent of the British and the *émigrés* on Quiberon, and the pusillanimous conduct of the Comte d'Artois<sup>1</sup> on that occasion, placed fresh arms in the hands of the Thermidorians, and made the ridiculous and futile talk from Verona of "clemency and pardon" to the early revolutionaries more ridiculous and futile than before.

Again Mallet writes to Sainte-Aldegonde :—

"If they wish to lose everything let them go on with their *équipées à la* Quiberon, their extravagances

<sup>1</sup> The last vol. (iii.) of the *Dropmore Papers*, with its interesting introduction by Mr. Walter FitzPatrick, gives a great deal of information as to the causes of the failure of the Quiberon expedition when Pitt had at last resolved on the despatch of 20,000 men under Lord Moira. The decision to send for the Comte d'Artois, who was accordingly conveyed in a British ship from the Elbe to Spithead, where he lived most uncomfortably in the cabin of a small and crowded seventy-four, unable to land at Portsmouth for fear of arrest for debt, was an unfortunate one. Though he talked a great deal about it, he could never make up his mind to insist on being landed in France and joining his heroic Vendean followers, and the British Government made no attempt to facilitate his landing in England. The whole business as described in this correspondence shows the usual ill-management of Pitt's Government in war ; and exhibits the blustering but irresolute D'Artois in a very unfavourable light.



*à la* Coblentz, their fables of chivalry, of Dunois and Gaston de Foix, of kings who speak of conquering their kingdom without a battalion, who talk at Verona as Henry IV. had the right to talk on the field of Ivry. In heaven's name, my dear friend, once for all stop this deluge of folly, silence your impertinent pamphleteers, cut off your moustaches, tell the *émigrés* to cease exterminating one another if they wish to go back to France and to their properties. . . . It is not for us to direct events in the country, it is for them to guide us. The Monarchists there dread nothing so much as our great measures, our great armies, our great plans, which have produced such great results." All illusions as to the usefulness of the war are gone. "I am anxious for and I believe in a general peace. The Powers have assuredly nothing better to hope for . . . whether they recognise the King or not matters not six farthings; it is by France herself and not by beaten and execrated foreigners that he must be adopted."

Unfortunately the Monarchists within were little wiser than the Royalists without. The mistaken action of the latter had increased the chance that the new Republican constitution, which was being elaborated in the Convention, would be accepted by the men of moderate opinions in the country, where the Thermidorians who clung to power with the desperation of fear again made common cause with the Mountain, and succeeded in carrying the decrees of Fructidor reserving two-thirds of the places in the new councils to members of the Convention. These decrees raised a storm of indignation which gave a fresh impulse to royalist feeling. But their leaders, and especially some of their writers, instead of biding their time and trusting to the annual elections to turn the growing movement to advantage, played into the hands of the Convention

by taking up their challenge without concert or direction, save the deliberations in the sections of Paris; they blundered impetuously into the struggle for which the Thermidorians were longing and for which they had prepared by massing troops and arming the Jacobins; and the day of the 13th of Vendémiaire, when Bonaparte under the direction of Barras crushed the *Jeunesse*, ensured the continuance under legal forms of the Jacobin rule and destroyed the hopes alike of a royalist restoration and of a moderate republic. ‘*Nous voilà retombés,*’ wrote Mallet du Pan on 28th October,<sup>1</sup> ‘*dans un abîme sans fond.*’ “Only those who know by what efforts Paris has been roused from its lethargy can judge of the difficulty of again bringing about a similar conjunction of favourable circumstances.” The depth of his discouragement shows how real in his opinion had been the chance which had come into view during these months for the first time since the fatal days of October 1789 of ending the Revolution by the establishment of a constitutional monarchy, by an anticipation in fact of 1814.<sup>2</sup> Mallet du Pan dwelt on the part played by the Revolutionaries of 1789 and the Constitutionals of 1791, whom the *émigrés* and their King had been too shortsighted to conciliate, in the victory of the Jacobin Republic. But the *émigrés* were not displeased at the catastrophe “because the livery of the *ancien régime* had not

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Sainte-Aldegonde.

<sup>2</sup> “Je vous certifie que le rétablissement de la Monarchie était le but central des opérations; on y fut parvenu, sans aucun doute, si la Convention eut été forcé à renoncer à la réélection, et avec un nouveau Corps législatif” (*Lettres de Mallet du Pan à Saladin Egerton*, p. 27).

been at once assumed," "because the royalism of its authors did not possess its sixteen quarterings"!<sup>1</sup> A few months later he uttered the prophecy which was to prove so terribly precise :—

‘On ne recouvrera la monarchie que sur des monceaux de cendres et de cadavres, et après avoir vu un usurpateur en saisir les rênes et les conserver peut-être fort longtemps’.

The action of Mallet du Pan during the critical months thus briefly sketched would be sufficient, even if it stood alone, to justify his title to the possession of high political capacity. From this time he definitely takes the place claimed for him by M. Thureau-Dangin as the most prominent, active and devoted representative of the only royalism worthy of the name, of the royalism which, if it had been adopted in 1795, would undoubtedly have terminated the Revolution, and which alone was to bear fruit in the future. His voluminous official reports and private letters at this time illustrate his finest qualities as a writer, his genius for realising and depicting the exact condition of public opinion, his power of analysing party feeling and party distinctions, his insight into the real needs of the situation, his courage in advocating unpalatable views; all the qualities in short which distinguish the constructive statesman. The rest of his career will only testify to the apparent uselessness during his own life of the self-sacrificing exercise of these remarkable faculties.

The advent of the Directory to power not only put an end to the hopes of peace, but inaugurated a phase of the war which was not to end till Europe had been

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Sainte-Aldegonde, 28th October 1795.



overturned from one end to the other, till it had more than justified the prediction which Mallet had made in January 1792. The pages of the Correspondence for the Emperor will enable us to follow Mallet du Pan's unavailing counsels as to the conduct of the war and the general situation of France under the Directory. But it is time to turn to his life and occupations in the ancient and aristocratic Republic of Berne which was his home for nearly four years, and where his son had joined his family after witnessing the bloody revolution at Geneva, and hearing the proclamation read which condemned Mallet du Pan as one of the first of those to suffer death if ever found in the territory of the State. He has left a description of Berne which is worth quoting :—

“The contrast between Geneva and Berne is at all times striking ; the one an old, irregular, and in part a gloomy town, inhabited by an intelligent, disputatious, over-active people, hemmed up in their beehive, on the confines of three other States ; surrounded by a country full of natural beauties, but far from fertile ; bare of verdure and fine timber, and through which the access to the town is confined to dusty roads, without any agreeable circumstances save the view of the lake and the Alps. Berne, on the contrary, is the capital of a large canton, and the place of residence of an ancient and powerful aristocracy, many of whom deserted their baronial residences in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to seek the security and immunities of an Imperial and walled town, and who subsequently brought a large portion of the Swiss territory under their dominion. With the exception of the Pays de Vaud, the population of the canton was German—a grave, methodical people, chiefly engaged in pastoral and agricultural pursuits ; many of them wealthy ; a hard, rugged, fine race of men. The town itself is a

model of order, cleanliness and attention to public objects ; the country around hilly and wooded, nearly all in pasture land, and watered with numerous streams—a perfect picture of agricultural prosperity and agreeable scenery. The roads are as fine as any in Europe, with broad footways to a considerable distance from the town ; the woods and meadows intersected by paths in every direction, and the Jungfrau, Eigers, and Wetterhorn, with various intermediate chains of Alps, bounding the horizon. According to all appearances, and also in reality, a happy and well-governed country. No taxes, a strict administration of the revenues of the State, justice done between man and man ; in most respects an excellent government, and yet vastly remote from the *beau idéal* of modern times.”<sup>1</sup>

As for the Bernese Government its faults were those of a government—

“founded on a principle of exclusion, and jealous of any distinction, whether arising from wealth, active intelligence, or social rank, other in fact than that of *member of the Great Council of Berne*. Hence a systematic discouragement of manufacturing industry and political discussion, and a feeling towards the nobles of the Pays de Vaud which generally made the government lean towards the peasantry in all the differences between the gentry and the people. With all these faults, however, there was at Berne what is generally found in all aristocratic Republics, a character of elevation and energy which is seldom seen in more popular governments ; and this observation in some measure holds good of individuals in such States, in whom republican virtues are often found united with pride of birth and ancestry.”<sup>2</sup>

The life of the family was simplicity itself. Their finances were reduced to a low ebb, but in one of

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Mallet's few allusions to such matters, replying to an offer from De Castries of assistance, he says, about this time, that he was still living on what he had saved from the wreck of Paris and Geneva and that he had not yet suffered physical privation, '*et c'est beaucoup*'. He refused therefore to abuse the kindness of his fellow victims, expressing his confidence in finding resources when his plan of life was decided on. These as it happened were provided until 1798 by his political correspondence for Vienna, Berlin and Lisbon; and there is in existence an account-book in which he kept a strict account of his expenditure, which never exceeded an income of about £400 a year, while he always had a reserve fund of £200 or £300 for unforeseen expenses. Jealous of his personal independence, which he always looked on as his most precious possession, and therefore forced to practise a rigid economy, he never neglected the claims of friends or the education of his children; and while the family were all dining at ninepence a head he provided his sons and daughters with an Italian master and a music master.

"At first<sup>1</sup> we had furnished lodgings in the Grande Rue, on the second floor of a grocer's shop, kept by a nephew of the great Haller, bearing the same name, and proud of it, not because it had been honoured by his distinguished relative, but because it was the name of a patrician family. Our apartments were altogether warmed with stoves; there was not a chimney in the whole house; and we were fed from the hotel or the *restaurateur*. This manner of supply was called the *cantine*, from an old-fashioned word, *cantina*, a cellar or pot-house, whence the French military word *cantine*, or

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences*.



soldier's can. The fare was execrable, but the cheapness perfectly incredible. We had as many portions as we chose of each sort of mess, and so far as I remember we all dined for thirty *batz*, or 3s. 6d. At the end of a few months we got tired of the Hallers and the *cantine*, and took an airy and cheerful apartment on the Market Place. A market day is one of the great sights of Berne, the peasantry resorting to it from many miles around in their light carts, generally drawn by four horses of a fine breed, well harnessed and driven by reins. The provisions they bring are abundant and excellent of their kind ; but the Bernois are bad cooks ; their cookery, as well as their language, is of German origin, but degenerated, and as they are very inhospitable their cookery is not likely to improve. During the years we were at Berne we did not once dine with any Bernois family. My father was asked to the houses of members of the Government, but alone. . . .

“Our society principally consisted of French and Genevese refugees, among whom the virtuous and distinguished President of the National Assembly, Mounier, and his family, stood foremost in our regard. The other French emigrants of our acquaintance were chiefly from Lyons and Franche-Comté. The Lyonese were among the survivors of that destructive siege which is remembered as one of the most terrific events of the French Revolution ; persons of the middle classes, chiefly manufacturers and merchants ; well-informed, domestic, and of the most respectable habits ; by far the best class of French emigrants I have known. We lived upon terms of intimacy with several of them, and with many of our own countrymen who had lately fled from Geneva. Among the latter were the Gallatins, Falquets, Diodatis, and a spruce, middle-aged bachelor, Sarrazin, who had been in the service of the King of Prussia, and who, with good sense and good manners, made himself ridiculous by his adherence

to the stiff gait, tight dress, and coxcombical habits of a Prussian Guardsman: he was a sort of *beau* to Madame Diodati. Count Gallatin and his wife were among the most distinguished Genevese: he a superior man, in spite of his affected manners, and a great friend of my father's, who for several years corresponded with him. He died minister of Bavaria at Paris in 1823, and was of the same family as Albert Gallatin, of the United States. . . .

"Our little circle of refugees met several times a week, sometimes at one house, sometimes at another; for many of our friends lived in the immediate vicinity of the town. The winters at Berne are often beautiful. I have seen there six weeks of uninterrupted bright, clear frost, with an almost unclouded sky, and the ground, as it were, sparkling with gems. This was the time for long excursions; nor did the severity of the season ever interrupt our social intercourse. Our walks home at night from the country houses of our friends, muffled up in our cloaks, and with servants carrying lanterns, were often full of merriment. The interests, opinions and prejudices of our little circle were all engaged on the same side; we only differed as to the *means* of bringing about a counter-revolution, and my father's judgment in these matters being held paramount, whenever he condescended to join our parties it was considered as a great compliment."

At Berne Mallet du Pan was for his purposes fortunately placed; he was in the very centre of intrigue and diplomacy, and surrounded by *émigrés* and emissaries of every party. Many calls upon his time arose from the arrival of political characters or other individuals who came to him for one reason or another, some to communicate their schemes and solicit his advice, others to request his assistance with the allied

courts, others again merely to talk politics and make his acquaintance :—

“ The greater number of these persons came from Paris, the Swiss frontier being the only outlet, and Switzerland itself the scene of much political correspondence and intrigue. I have a note of Madame de Staël's, written to my father from the Faucon (an inn at Berne) in terms highly complimentary, requesting an interview with him. He, however, declined seeing her which was somewhat stern, and can only be explained by his dread of her intriguing disposition and his extreme aversion to political notoriety in women. Such was the opinion entertained of my father's judgment, means of information, and probity of character that some of the most distinguished individuals among the French Constitutionalists, such as the Comte de Narbonne, Theodore de Lameth, Mathieu Dumas and others, whose opinions and conduct in the Revolution had been animadverted upon in his writings in terms of great severity, nevertheless consulted him in the most unreserved manner, and expressed on all occasions their esteem for his character.”<sup>1</sup>

From the earliest days of his settlement in Berne Mallet du Pan had been suspiciously watched by the able French minister Barthélemy who reported to his Government the supposed intrigues, the ‘*diaboliques menées*’ in which he was engaged, and cast about for the means of “eliminating” him from his native country. ‘*On ne peut se dissimuler,*’ he wrote in March 1794, ‘*que ce Genevois est une vraie mèche d'enfer pour notre pays.*’ These words may be placed side by side with the imprecations from the court of the regent at

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*



Verona against '*ce diable d'homme qu'on ne pouvait parvenir à faire taire*'. There is, as M. Descostes has well said, abuse which does honour to its object, and the attacks with which Mallet du Pan was overwhelmed by extremists on both sides is the truest homage which could have been paid to his political wisdom.

There were at that time but two foreign ministers at Berne besides the French representative Barthélemy, those from Sardinia and England. Baron Vignet, the former,—

"was a large lumbering man, slovenly to the greatest degree, with his waistcoat always open, and his shirt frill spattered with snuff; chattering with all comers; cursing the French, and playing whist with the old dowagers of Berne. I must not omit his dinner which was one of the most important of his concerns. Truffles were a great article with him, and he always carried some in his pocket which he offered to people as one offers a lozenge or a pinch of snuff. He had a great opinion of my father and the kindest feelings towards us, and often came and chatted with my mother in the morning; on some of which occasions I have seen him call for a little silver saucepan and a couple of eggs when the plenipotentiary would pare and slice his truffles, mix them with the eggs, and stirring the whole over the fire make an excellent mess of *œufs brouillés*. With all this the baron had very good natural sense, and no want of shrewdness or political discernment." <sup>1</sup>

Mallet du Pan's relations with the court of Turin perhaps owed their origin to his acquaintance with the British minister there, Mr. Trevor afterwards Lord

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*

Hampden, to whom he had been introduced by Sir John Macpherson. Trevor remained one of his warmest admirers and friends ; and his relations with the British representatives at Berne began auspiciously, his constant visits to Lord Robert Fitzgerald attracting the attention of the French spies. Lord Robert seems to have been a rather typical specimen of an English diplomatist ; “a fine, aristocratic-looking person,” he is described, “with the air and address of a high-bred gentleman ; nor was he deficient in information and intelligence ; but inactive, and without capacity for affairs”. But Mallet’s relations with the successive English ministers were early disturbed by an incident which gave him much concern at the time, and very much weakened the credit he had enjoyed with the British Government. Careful as he was he could not be always on his guard against misrepresentations, and on this occasion he seems to have been misled. In September 1794 Theodore de Lameth and his friends thought they saw a chance of organising the moderates in Paris through the Thermidorians, so as to bring about the restoration of a government in France which could protect its inhabitants and be a guarantee of peace in Europe. They offered their services on condition that Lafayette and others should be set at liberty by the Powers ; and induced Mallet du Pan and Mounier to transmit their proposals to Lord Grenville, which they accordingly did through the British minister at Berne. George III. in a note to Lord Grenville observed : “Lord Robert Fitzgerald (the minister) is certainly not an able or quick-sighted man, and the two French gentlemen, M. Mounier and M. du Pan, are men of superior talents, and may have their

own private views to effect".<sup>1</sup> Mr. Wickham, therefore, a personal friend of Lord Grenville's, was sent out to inquire into the matter. Mallet's son relates what followed:—

"Mr. Wickham's arrival was an event. To us it was at first a peculiarly agreeable circumstance; for his wife was a Genevese lady the daughter of Professor Bertrand, who had married a Mallet and whose family was well known to us, and highly respectable. But although Mr. Wickham was always courteous and considerate to my father, the good understanding and considerate feeling with which their acquaintance began soon subsided. Mr. Wickham discovered or thought he discovered, on communicating with the individuals whose overtures had led to his mission, that there was little or no foundation for the expectations held out by them, and that they had neither party nor friends at Paris whom it might be an object to support. This may have been all true, but it was probably expressed too unreservedly. Mounier, who had been a party to the overtures made to the British Government, and whose temper was quick, was offended with Mr. Wickham's conclusions, and would have nothing more to say to him."

George III. was very angry at what he considered the "duplicity" of Mounier and Mallet du Pan, and attributed the fiasco not to imprudence on their part but to "premeditated falsehood". He ordered that in future they were to be "kept out of any business Mr. Wickham might have to transact".<sup>2</sup> Lord Robert Fitzgerald had previously reported that they were

<sup>1</sup> *Dropmore Papers*, vol. ii., p. 638.

<sup>2</sup> Note to Lord Grenville, 4th December 1794, *Dropmore Papers*.



now undeceived and "not a little ashamed that two such great men should have been so grossly duped!"

"My father," continues the *Reminiscences*, "remained upon friendly terms; but when Mr. Wickham replaced Lord Robert Fitzgerald, who was soon recalled, circumstances arose which could hardly fail to disturb the good harmony between them. Lord R. Fitzgerald's diplomatic functions were of a very quiet character, but Mr. Wickham's influence with Lord Grenville, his activity and talents, and the ample pecuniary means placed at his disposal, soon brought him plenty of business. The people who used to come to my father for his *opinions* now came to Mr. Wickham for *guineas*. Plots were got up in Franche-Comté and other parts of France on the credit of this new ally, and chiefly by determined and uncompromising Royalists, who would have nothing short of the old *régime*. Differences of opinion, therefore, soon arose between Mr. Wickham and my father, both as to the description of person to be trusted and the end proposed. My father had a very indifferent opinion of some of Mr. Wickham's agents, considering them as some of the worst instruments that could be employed for the objects he had in view. On the other hand, Mr. Wickham thought my father much too favourable to the Constitutionalists, and the dupe of their ambitious views. Some ill humour was thus generated on both sides, without altogether interrupting their intercourse. Mr. Wickham went on his own way without consulting my father, whose extensive correspondence and habits of communication with political men were not unnaturally a cause of distrust and caution to a regular diplomatist; and my father, on his side, kept to his old path, without mixing in any of the counter-revolutionary intrigues afloat, of which Berne then became the headquarters."

These differences, though they cut him off from communication with the British Government upon which he had in the summer of 1793 greatly relied for a wise and moderate war policy, did not permanently estrange Mallet du Pan from Wickham, who on several occasions in later years used his influence in his favour and contributed essentially in the advancement of his son after his death, a sincere and unusual proof of friendship.

It may easily be conceived that Mallet du Pan's natural aversion to intrigue was strengthened by this occurrence, and that he had no great hopes from similar schemes, such as that, for instance, of which Montgaillard two years later made him his chief confidant, to bring over Pichegru then at the head of the army of the Rhine to the royalist side through the Prince de Condé. His own time was fully occupied by the task of digesting the reports he continually received from France, and preparing his weekly budget for the three Courts. But he maintained at the same time a most active private correspondence in which he expressed his ideas with even less reserve than in his diplomatic despatches. The interchange of letters between Mallet du Pan and a large circle of friends of every shade of anti-revolutionary opinions formed indeed one of the most important sources of his information, and now, that his journalistic work was for a time interrupted, one of his chief means of influencing public opinion.

There was first of all the group of constitutional Monarchists with whom Mallet had allied himself, in sympathy though not in hope, during the first months of the National Assembly. The Comte de

Lally-Tollendal was already known for his devotion to the memory of his father, the General Lally of Indian renown, executed under the old *régime*. His eloquence and his vigorous championship of the principles of liberty on the English pattern brought him early into prominence in the National Assembly, and early drove him from it into exile. He was a man of high and honourable character, and master of a literary style, forcible and rhetorical, which might perhaps have won him a free election to the seat in the Academy presented to him by Louis XVIII. at the Restoration. There was, however, an element of Irish exuberance in his character which made Lally a somewhat burlesque figure. Rivarol described him as '*le plus gras des hommes sensibles*'; a man '*à démonstrations, à grands sentiments, à embrassades,*' says Sainte-Beuve. Lord Sheffield's lively daughter gives us some very entertaining glimpses<sup>1</sup> of Lally-Tollendal, with his alternations of high and low spirits, his declamation of Voltaire's plays and his own compositions, his flow of amusing talk, his dancing with the "greatest good humour to the music of a Fletching fiddler," and his dark allusions to the pond in the park coupled with meaning questions about Lord Clive's end. "The maids who sleep over his room say he walks about the greatest part of the night and groans and stamps and

<sup>1</sup> See *Girlhood of Maria Josepha* (afterwards Lady Stanley of Alderley), by her granddaughter, Miss Adeane. She describes her first impressions of Lally-Tollendal and Mounier at Lausanne as follows: "If I had not heard the one speak and heard of the other I should have set them both down as very stupid men. . . . Lally has a very heavy countenance till it is animated by conversation; and Mounier looks insignificant."



sighs most horribly." She tells of his somewhat too tardy marriage with a Scotch lady, of his *liaison* with Princesse d'Hénin, of his claim as the grandson of an Irishman to British nationality, his application for an Irish peerage, and his success at length in obtaining a pension of £300. He seems to have become somewhat ashamed of his precipitate flight from Paris in October 1789, and redeemed it by his courageous return in 1791 when he exerted himself with Lafayette in the interests of the royal house, witnessing the events of the summer of 1792, and only escaping from prison on the eve of the September massacres by the help of a friendly door-keeper of the National Assembly.

"He employed himself the first two days of his imprisonment by preparing a defence of Montmorin, and proved his innocence so clearly that he was acquitted and released, but the *aimables sans-culottes* interfered and insisted on a new trial, in consequence of which he was sent back to the Abbaye where he met his unfortunate end. The last three days Lally made his own speech for the scaffold and intended to hold very high language and to let them hear a little truth. I have sometimes doubted whether he was not disappointed at losing the opportunity of delivering his harangue."<sup>1</sup>

With all his foibles, however, he was a warm and generous friend and admirer of Mallet du Pan, who died in his house. He returned in 1801 to France, and lived in retirement near Bordeaux, and on the Restoration he was created a peer of France, and played a consistent and honourable part in defence of his lifelong opinions in the Chamber, dying a few months before the Revolution of 1830.

<sup>1</sup> *Girlhood of Maria Josepha*, p. 192.

Mounier, with whom Mallet du Pan became intimate at Lausanne and at Berne, and for whose character and ability he expresses the highest esteem, is a less inspiring figure. Madame de Staël called him "passionately reasonable". By the irony of fate he is famous in history as the proposer of the oath of the Tennis Court, an act of which he heartily repented. His real title to remembrance is his knowledge of constitutional theory, and his attempt to apply that knowledge in the first months of the National Assembly of which he was President during the days of October. At Geneva; in England, where he was glad to accept a travelling tutorship to Lord Hawke's son; at Berne, where he returned with his pupil; and, finally, in the territories of the Duke of Brunswick, where he set up an academy for young men, he gained fresh distinction by his political writings, and perhaps lost some of the pedantic narrowness which unfitted him for leadership. He returned at all events to France in 1801 where he died five years later, and where he honourably maintained his opinions and his independence, though he served the Emperor as prefect of the department at Ile-et-Vilaine and afterwards as a Counsellor of State. He died in 1805, and his son, Baron Mounier, played a creditable part under the Restoration.

Above either of these in Mallet du Pan's regard was Malouet, by whose side he had stood through the first three years of the Revolution. After his return to France in 1801 from England, which had been his home since his almost miraculous escape from Paris after the September massacres, Bonaparte was glad to make use of his remarkable administrative capacity and experience as Maritime Prefect at Antwerp, and

he lived just long enough to become Minister of Marine and a member of the Chamber of Peers under Louis XVIII. He will ever remain known for his loyal devotion to the King and Queen: '*N'oubliez jamais son nom,*' was Marie Antoinette's injunction to the Dauphin. But he is equally with Mallet du Pan the most prominent and sagacious of the liberal Monarchists; together with his friend he united moderation of opinions with courage and consistency in expressing and maintaining them, and his memoirs give by far the best account of the policy and action of the early Constitutionalists in the National Assembly. But while Mallet's hostility to revolutionary principles grew with his knowledge of them, and his criticisms became more profound and valuable as he realised the European character of the convulsion, Malouet, at a distance from the scene of events and cut off as he was in England from all the sources of knowledge open to his friend, yielded to the influences which surrounded him and to his natural longing to return to his own country, and became increasingly inclined to what Mallet thought hazy and impossible ideas of compromise. The circumstances and character of the two men in fact influenced them in a different direction without destroying their real agreement or their personal friendship, and Malouet's letters during their differences in 1797 remained models of temperate reasoning. Mallet's son has left the following picture of this interesting and attractive figure:—

“Malouet was, to the time of my father's death and his own subsequent return to France, our best and dearest friend; a man who possessed every virtue which can distinguish a public man and form an estimable and useful citizen; enlightened, moderate, firm, labori-



ous, eloquent, with a strong sense of public duty, eminently disinterested ; of an undaunted courage, and yet in the greatest degree tender and amiable in the private relations of life ; delightful in conversation by his simplicity, playfulness, and indulgence ; wholly free from any affectation of superiority ; and yet, as observes Montlosier, with a mind and manner the most commanding and dignified. Such was the man, whose friendship and regard I shall ever be proud of.”<sup>1</sup>

The most original of the moderates and always one of Mallet du Pan’s warmest friends, was the Auvergnat noble, the Comte de Montlosier, whose beginnings in the National Assembly have already been noticed. He was Mallet’s most vehement and not too discreet supporter in his campaign against the spirit of the emigration.

“On his emigrating from France in April 1792 he found on his arrival at Coblenz that the pure Royalists considered him as a contaminated person, who had *transigé* with the Revolution ; and being cut by one of these *énergumènes*, M. Dambray, he fought and wounded him, after which he met with no further molestation. I never knew any man more free from littleness of character and selfish views. He was a self-educated man ; a considerable geologist for his time ; and possessed of some knowledge in various branches of history and philosophy ; but he was too ambitious of literary distinction, and his style was often involved and obscure. He was also too much given to systems—systems of Government, systems of morals, social systems ; but he nevertheless possessed what appears quite inconsistent with such a turn of mind—great vigour of purpose ; and he seems by some late proceedings at Paris to be as firm a friend to constitutional freedom and religious tolerance as he was fifty years ago.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Mallet du Pan's friendships were not confined to those who held his exact shade of political opinions, for he was as far as possible from being a doctrinaire in politics. The development of the Revolution into a European event brought him as we have seen into political partnership, not only with continental statesmen, but with Frenchmen of various parties and especially with many of the pure Royalists, such as the Prince de Poix, the Marshal de Castries and the Comte de Sainte-Aldegonde, men who though *émigrés* in fact were as far as himself from sharing the incurable prejudices of their class. With such men as these he found himself as time went on more in sympathy, the sympathy born of active co-operation, than with the older friends. With De Castries and Sainte-Aldegonde, at all events, he maintained a voluminous correspondence, and with the latter he formed a most cordial friendship. Sainte-Aldegonde was of a great Netherlands family<sup>1</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> "Je n'oublierai jamais les manières nobles, jolies et cependant parfaitement simples du grand seigneur Français. Mon père avait pour M. de Sainte-Aldegonde une confiance et une amitié qui ne se démentirent jamais, et ce dernier sentit la mort de mon père comme il aurait senti celle d'un frère" (note by J. L. Mallet). The topsyturvydom of Revolution is well illustrated by the fact that at the time of his death Mallet was assisting Sainte-Aldegonde with a payment of £25 a year which he had hastened to offer as soon as the *Mercurie Britannique* had been successfully launched. The offer and its acceptance does honour to both men. Sainte-Aldegonde's royal master was little better off. During the Quiberon expedition, the Comte d'Artois could not set foot in England for fear of arrest for debt, and there is a curious letter from Lord Buckingham to his brother Lord Grenville (4th Sept. 1797), in which he says: "In the meantime do not let the Comte d'Artois starve, which is pretty near his actual situation. . . . The only sure and clear result of all these conferences is that Monsieur has not one farthing, and having received only £1,000 for

had before the Revolution become attached to the Comte d'Artois, probably through his marriage with the daughter of the Duchesse de Tourzel, Gouvernante des Enfants de France, who first introduced him to Mallet du Pan. Their meeting at Schaffhausen cemented a friendship which ended only with Mallet's death. Sainte-Aldegonde was placed in the Chamber of Peers at the Restoration. Marshal de Castries had won distinction in the pre-Revolutionary wars, and had been Minister of Marine to Louis XVI. in 1780. His son's duel with Charles de Lameth and the consequent sack of his hotel, one of the first acts of violence of the Parisian mob, had drawn from Mallet a vigorous denunciation of the growing spirit of anarchy. "The Marshal," wrote his friend after his death, "supported with no less dignity than resignation the trials of adversity. Never either in his sentiments, his conduct, or his counsels did he lose sight of the prudence acquired in difficult times, of the moderation which marks a man in whom reason is superior to resentment, of the conciliatory spirit without which an unfortunate cause becomes a hopeless one." His high character and great services gave him an influential position at the *émigré* court, and the Duke of Brunswick, whom he had defeated at Closter-camp, now chivalrously welcomed him at Wolfenbüttel and raised a monument there to his memory on his death in 1801. Through both of these Mallet was constantly able to give information and advice to the Princes of a kind which they were not in the habit of receiving from other sources. He also, through the group of friends assembled at the court of the Duke

the last three months is not very likely to get fat" (*Dropmore Papers*, vol. iii., p. 368).



of Brunswick, communicated his views to the Duke, upon whom he once said the dictatorship of Europe ought to be conferred. The Chevalier de Gallatin, Mallet's recommendation of whom to the Duke obtained for him a nomination to his Council and important diplomatic employment in later years, was one of these. On a somewhat different level from most of the above stands another of Mallet's most constant and brilliant correspondents, the Abbé de Pradt, whose remarkable pamphlet, *L'Antidote au Congrès de Rastadt*, was even attributed to Joseph de Maistre. He was one of those who grew tired of exile when Bonaparte restored order to France, and as Bishop of Poitiers and afterwards Archbishop of Malines, Baron and Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, confidant of Napoleon and his ambassador at Warsaw in 1812, and finally as pensioner of Louis XVIII., he was permitted to gratify to the full the cravings of personal ambition.

The names of Necker, De Panat, De Sales, De Maistre and Portalis close the list of the best known of Mallet du Pan's correspondents, but he maintained also a private correspondence with many of the public men mentioned in the preceding pages.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE DIRECTORY IN THE VIENNA CORRESPONDENCE  
—THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR—SECOND  
PAMPHLET.

1795-1796.

THE period embraced by the Vienna correspondence, of which some further account must now be given, is perhaps the dreariest and least known of the revolutionary epoch. Not a man concerned in administration or in the active work of politics stands forth from the picture, not an act either of destruction or of reorganisation has left any permanent trace. The annals of the Directory would be the meanest passage in French history if they had not been relieved by the military triumphs of the man who was to destroy it. The long-drawn analysis of these barren years would indeed become wearisome from the uniform baseness of men and events, were it not for the answer which it supplies to the question how it was that a Government so detestable and so detested, in administration so weak, yet so tyrannical in the exercise of power, was able not only to stand for four years, but to carry on with success and glory a war against allied Europe. The character of the whole period is one of internal conflict. The Government welcomed after Thermidor as the liberators of France from the tyranny of the Reign of

Terror had lost its character of strength and consistency at the same time as it threw off the yoke of a savage dictatorship. The detestation of the people for the men whom Mallet described as the '*valets qui ont pris le sceptre de leurs maîtres après les avoir assassinés*' was brought to a head by their inability, associated as they were in all the crimes of their predecessors, to satisfy the popular demand for "peace and bread," a demand which in the streets, in the theatres, and in the *cafés*, with threats and with curses, with satire and with jest, was everywhere repeated with growing intensity. The Directory which succeeded to this period of anarchy no less faithfully adhered to revolutionary methods and was no less in opposition to the wishes of the mass of the nation, but as the champions of France against the arms of Europe they found in war their strength and safety.

The abortive rising of the sections ensured the defeat of the Directors proposed by the newly elected third of the councils, moderate, distinguished and capable men; and enthroned the five regicides La Réveillère-Lepaux, Rewbell, Le Tourneur, Barras and Sieyès, the last of whom characteristically declined a place in the system he had elaborated and was replaced by Carnot. Mallet drew the most unflattering portraits of the new rulers of France. '*Ce pauvre petit philosophailleur*' La Réveillère, the high priest of a new religion,<sup>1</sup> the acolyte of Robespierre, Petion

<sup>1</sup> Talleyrand's well-known *mot* is perhaps worth repeating. La Réveillère-Lepaux had recommended to the Institut a religious celebration of the three great acts of life—birth, marriage and death. "I have only one observation to make," said Talleyrand, "Jésus-Christ pour fonder sa religion a été crucifié et est ressuscité. Vous auriez dû tâcher d'en faire autant."



and Buzot ; and Rewbell, able, artful, experienced, of whom Camille Desmoulins had once said that his countenance was a study of nature intended to portray envy, hatred and malice, and whom Bonaparte afterwards detested but employed, were both drawn from the benches of the Extreme Left, which Mirabeau had once silenced with the words, '*Faites taire cette canaille*'. Carnot, *fort et fin*, one of the heroes of the revolutionary legend, is described as engrossed in his special functions the direction of military operations, mixing little in intrigues of party, and willing to serve all in succession as he had shown in making himself the accomplice of the enormities of the Terror. "You cannot be wrong if you do the will of the people," was his political motto. Le Tourneur was a captain of engineers, Carnot's intimate friend, and, like him, always clinging to the dominant faction, '*travailleur et paperassier*'. At the head stood Barras, the patron of Bonaparte : Barras, '*qui joue le roi et le Genghis Khan*,' not unmindful of his birth and having much at heart to be considered and treated as a person of quality, a man of limited ability, without morality, honour or education, "having the tone and courage of a soldier, and bearing himself in politics with the same audacity as in his debauchery".

The constitution over which these men presided would have been unworkable in any hands. It was largely inspired by the lesson of previous failures. The constitution of 1791 had erred as greatly in the disastrous preponderance it conferred upon the legislative functions of the State as the Conventional constitution, which followed it, did in the tyranny it permitted to the executive in the supremacy of the Committees.

The constitution of 1795, of which no better criticism exists than that passed on it by Necker in the work he published on the Revolution in the following year, aimed accordingly at dividing the body politic into three separate and independent parts, none of which should be supreme. It was an expedient favoured by the example of the framers of the American constitution. The Council of the *Jeunes Gens* was to supply the imagination which conceived legislation, the Council of the *Anciens* the wisdom which weighed and revised it, and the Directory, with the ministers subordinate to them, the whole executive power of the Government; while the only connection between the legislature and the executive was through the machinery of exhortative addresses on the one side and ordinary and extraordinary envoys on the other. Such a separation of powers, if each was to remain a reality, was a caricature of constitutional theory. In the hands of honest rulers it must have produced confusion and deadlock, in those of the Directors it was simply, as Mallet du Pan expressed it, '*le moyen d'allier avec les formes de la liberté la nécessité, la combinaison et la force du despotisme*'. It ensured the failure of republican government, and led after two *coups d'État* to a military dictatorship. That it lasted so long as four years was due to the apathetic attitude of the mass of the people.

The cannon of Vendémiaire, which established the Directory and crushed the *Jeunesse*, taught a lesson which for thirty years prevented any attempt at popular rising in the streets of Paris. Five years of baffled hopes of the restoration of order had produced a lasting impression upon the people; hence-

forth, when their will was being overruled by the Directory, when streets, bridges, and squares were bristling with troops and cannon, they went about their business or their pleasure with the same carelessness with which the "Greeks of Constantinople in the last centuries of the Empire had seen every six months the dethronement or assassination of an emperor".<sup>1</sup> The Directory entered upon their rule with the immense advantage of a people to govern who placed their safety in a total abnegation of political sentiment, in so far as their opinion might commit them to any line of action; and the 30,000 troops encamped at the gates of Paris were necessary only to protect them against their own extreme partisans. Among the people alone were heard the curses, threats and epigrams against the Government with which Paris continued to resound. The well-to-do classes preferred to cringe to their tyrants, and indulge in the stupid and selfish optimism of the Constitutionalists of 1792. Observers have familiarised us with the picture of the manners of the Directory, and many passages in this correspondence bring out with new details and new illustrations the union of luxury and privation characteristic of the time. Appalling accounts are given in the *Correspondence* of the licence and depravity in which the inhabitants of Paris sought compensation for their calamities. It was a state of things which was not confined to the capital. In Lyons—

"which is without bread or wood, where men live on rations of rice and burn their beds to warm them—

<sup>1</sup> "The people of France," wrote De Maistre, "will always accept their masters, never choose them" (*Considérations sur la France*).



selves, where the pavement is still red with the blood of 7,000 citizens of every rank massacred and shot down last year (1794), there are two theatres and several public halls open and always full, and a brazen luxury flaunts in the spoils of its victims. The Revolution has completed the extinction of the moral sense. Ties of relationship are weakened, the most atrocious egotism reigns in all hearts, honour and sentiment, duty and self-respect are no longer to be found."

The agricultural population was the one class which had gained in material prosperity. These advantages they were determined to maintain; the *régime* of tithe and *gabelle*, of *parlements* and *intendants*, was gone for ever, but the departments were ill-disposed to a Government which either neglected the duties of administration or harassed them with requisitions in men, money and kind, which persecuted the religion to which they still clung, and endeavoured to replace by republican usages the thousand social institutions of which the Church was the centre. Conservatism and dread of change were then, as now, the leading characteristics of the French peasantry, and it was even truer of them than of the Parisians, "that they would only turn upon the executioner when his axe was at their neck". "No revolution will ever begin with the people," is the profound reflection suggested to Mallet by the spectacle he witnessed; it is a reflection justified by the subsequent history of France, as well as by that of other countries. Princes and governments have often played for the lives and fortunes of their subjects; never before had the spectacle been afforded of a great nation accepting its position as the stake in the game of party strife.

It was a spectacle which might have aroused the scorn even of a Frenchman, and may perhaps excuse the passion with which Mallet, a foreigner, describes a nation—

“at once cruel and frivolous, servile and licentious, impetuous at one moment in its complaints, and forgetting them without motive in the next, careless in suffering as in prosperity, incapable of foresight or of reflection, selling in the morning like savages the bed on which they are to lie at night; such in every age has been the character of the people, such are they at the present hour, and such they will ever remain until the end of time.”<sup>1</sup>

‘*Les brigandages du Directoire sont des coups de poignard donnés à un cadavre.*’ A double criticism is contained in these words, and the character of the Government is treated in the same detail as that of the demoralised nation which so long supported its rule. For the Directory soon showed itself to be a mere continuation of the revolutionary *régime*, and maintained its power by availing itself of the division of opinion in the country, and by holding the balance between disorganised factions. Dreaded by all, the new rulers of France feared every party, and, relying in the last resort upon the Jacobins, they were nervously sensitive to the secret disaffection of the majority whose opposition they had been obliged to crush before they could establish their authority. Their policy thus continually betrayed a character of vacillation. After the *coup d’État* of Vendémiaire, they threw themselves upon the party by whose aid they had triumphed, and the rule of Terror started

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence for Vienna*, vol. i., p. 186.

again into activity, until the socialist conspiracy of Babœuf forced them to appeal to the support of the moderate parties by turning out the Jacobins from the places they had given them. Obligated to follow rather than direct the oscillations of public opinion, they alternately punished and caressed their extreme supporters, or struck at both parties by closing at the same time the anti-revolutionary *cafés* and the Jacobin club of the Panthéon, or by proposing an amnesty both for the members of the rebel sections and for the authors of the September massacres. The Directory, the ministers, and the Councils were divided amongst themselves, and the constitution, which had drawn a hard and fast line between the executive and the legislature, provided no means by which a deadlock between the functions of government could be avoided or overcome. "The Directory cannot govern the Assemblies, it must therefore obey them, conspire, or perish." The Councils, becoming at every election more moderate and anti-revolutionary, found themselves in two years in complete opposition to the Directory, and in the struggle of Fructidor 1797 in which the people stood neutral the executive, in command of the whole material power of the State, was able once more to override the feeling of the nation expressed in their elected Assemblies. Legislation, meanwhile, had been paralysed by this growing hostility and by the changing character of the councils. The number of laws made from the beginning of the Republic has been computed at 22,271, the majority of which it was impossible from their contradictory nature to execute. The instability of the laws destroyed all confidence; "they were received



like tempests, accepted with indifference, and forgotten as soon as made ;" and the Government superintended the execution of those only which aided them in the work of spoliation, or secured the ends of their party. Administration, indeed, had ceased to exist in the country ; the ministers and higher officials, grossly ignorant of the laws they had to administer and of the wants of the people, were more occupied with the management of their army of constantly changing employees than with the duties proper to responsible government. Corruption was carried to its greatest excess by officials whose miserably inadequate pay was often two years in arrear, and such agents, naturally unable to exercise any real control, were universally ignored or disobeyed. Many provinces—the Vivarais, Cévennes, Rouergue, Haute-Auvergne, and Bas-Languedoc—were practically in a state of independence. The western departments were in open rebellion, and in all brigandage partaking of the nature of the *chouannerie* was rife. '*Il n'y a aucune police dans toute l'étendue de la France,*' and Paris, garrisoned by the troops of the Directory, alone afforded a semblance of government. The picture would seem overcharged had we not the avowal of the Directory themselves made to the Council of the Five Hundred in December 1796 :—

"Every part of the administration is in decay, the pay of the troops is in arrear, the defenders of the country are in rags, and their disgust causes them to desert ; the military and civil hospitals are destitute of all medical appliances, the State creditors and contractors can recover but small portions of the sums due to them, the high roads are destroyed and communi-

cations interrupted, the public officials are without salaries from one end of the Republic to the other ; everywhere sedition is rife, assassination organised, and the police impotent ”.

Such was the official account of the chaos into which administration had fallen. But for the purpose of maintaining its ascendancy and devoting the resources of the country to the revolutionary propaganda, the system of the Directory with its restless energy, its active and powerful will, supplied all mere deficiencies of administrative order. The very freedom from the ordinary restraints of morality and prudence was the great secret of its power. Burke insists upon the—

“dreadful energy of a State in which property has nothing to do with the government. The design is wicked, impious, aggressive, but it is spirited, it is daring, it is systematic. . . . In that country entirely to cut off a branch of commerce, to extinguish a manufacture, to destroy the circulation of money, to violate credit, to suspend the course of agriculture, even to burn a city or lay waste a province of their own, does not cost them a moment's anxiety. To them the will, the wish, the want, the liberty, the toil, the blood of individuals is as nothing.”

The record of the financial operations of the Directory amply justifies Burke's description. The issue of paper money was a resource which the Terror and the Convention had almost exhausted, and the country was experiencing the inevitable consequences of the abuse of an inconvertible currency.<sup>1</sup> By the

<sup>1</sup> Mallet du Pan never encouraged the idea cherished by D'Ivernois, Lord Auckland and even by Malouet, that the financial exhaustion of France would help the allies. “Those who in

time the Directory came into office, assignats had been issued to the amount of 20,000,000,000 francs, and 100 francs in assignats was worth one and a half in coin. In two months the daily issue had risen from 100,000,000 to 600,000,000, and the total had increased to 40,000,000,000, while the value had fallen to  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The Government plunged into a vortex of frantic speculation, and anything like an accurate record of its fabulous indebtedness soon became impossible. Since 1792 the Government had ceased to number the notes; each minister coined money to supply his public and private necessities; the country was flooded with false assignats which it was impossible to distinguish from the real ones, and no kind of proportion had been kept between the alleged security and the gigantic superstructure of credit which had risen upon it. The official estimates give a pitiable idea of the incapacity and dishonesty of the republican financiers. Since the fall of Robespierre various computations had put the national property at from 10,000,000,000 to 17,000,000,000 of francs in assignats, thus officially recognising the depreciation by reckoning at the speculative price which paper bore in the market. The Finance Committee in 1795 announced the national property as worth 7,000,000,000 of *écus*. The actual value of the national domains at the end of the Terror might have been put at from 2,000,000,000 to 3,000,000,000, but such confusion and

London," he wrote in 1796 (*Correspondance politique pour servir à l'histoire du républicanisme en France*), "have predicted with such confidence that the fall of the assignats would bring about that of the Revolution and necessitate peace do not know France, the Revolution, or its agents."



corruption prevailed in their administration that a real estimate was perhaps impossible, and the nature of the security made it difficult to sell at all except at prices low enough to tempt speculators. Much, therefore, as the Government were able to profit by trading in their own paper issues, desperate measures were soon necessitated by the growing worthlessness of their paper. In a time of peace and prosperity Necker had never been able to raise in a single year a loan of more than 100,000,000. The Directory now demanded from an impoverished nation a loan of six times that amount, a sum equal to a year's revenue was to be raised within six weeks from a people whose whole effective capital in money and paper did not amount to more than double the sum to be levied ; and in spite of the most arbitrary and cruel methods of collection, in spite, in fact, of a general confiscation of money and goods, it may readily be conceived that not one-third of this loan was ultimately recovered by the Government. All taxation partook of the irregular nature of this loan, for regular means could never have supplied the immense necessities of the Directory. A large part was derived from the conquest and plunder of foreign countries, and the hope of foreign spoil was the principal inducement held out to the armies of France. At home the plunder of churches and of the *Mobilier National*, consisting of the confiscated plate, jewellery and valuables of the *émigrés*, was soon exhausted. The national domains, almost unsaleable, were alienated with extraordinary recklessness. Indirect taxes, which had been in large part remitted by the first Assemblies in an approach to free-trade principles, were re-imposed in all their severity, while of the direct taxes the most important

and onerous was the land-tax, half of which was collected in kind—a system of wholesale plunder which is one of the most distinctive marks of Jacobin rule. Everything necessary for the support of the armies was obtained in this manner ; grain of all kinds was collected in Government granaries ; shirts, stockings, cloth and linen were obtained in the same way ; and at one time 30,000 horses, at another 100,000 pairs of shoes, were to be supplied by contractors who, unpaid by the Government, enriched themselves by private pillage. Requisitions of men were not less fatal to the prosperity of the country, nor less difficult to execute. The memory of the dragonnades was revived by the pursuit of the young conscripts ; hussars and gendarmes carried on the *guerre aux réquisitionnaires*, who, at the least resistance, were tied together in twos or fours, and in this fashion were described as “flying to the defence of liberty”!

In 1721 the scheme of Law had collapsed and shaken the very foundation of credit, yet the issue of paper had not exceeded 1,500,000,000. The destruction of 30,000,000,000 of paper, at a time when half of the coin of the country had left it and the rest had been hoarded, might have been expected to produce a catastrophe of incalculable dimensions. But the consequences of financial error and dishonesty, instead of falling on the country in one crushing blow, extended over a series of disastrous years. The Revolution is distinguished by no one signal or special act of ruin, but almost every financial operation was in itself an act of bankruptcy, and every Government transaction a declaration of insolvency.

It would be a hopeless task to enumerate the cases

in which the Government suspended the payment of its creditors, sanctioned, by acknowledging, the depreciation of its paper, or revoked the sales of State property. It is enough that repudiation began in 1792, when Clavière, the Girondist Minister of Finance, announced that a new issue of paper would be applied to defraying the expenses of the war instead of paying the State creditors, and that it did not end till the final act of bankruptcy by the Consulate. If the holders of the Government stock, whose condition was acknowledged by the doles of bread and meat occasionally awarded to them, were the worst sufferers by the Revolution, the officials and pensioners were hardly better off, and the only classes which profited by the general ruin were the speculators in gold and silver, coin and bullion. The fortunes made by these *sang-sues publiques*, as they were called, whose opulence was considered an insult to the general misery, excited (however ignorantly) the bitterest feeling in the popular mind, although the spirit of speculation had extended with the issue of assignats of small sums to every class of the population. Speculation was not confined to money, but prevailed with regard to the only other form of wealth which retained exchange value at a time when the state of the currency had necessitated a return to the primitive system of barter. Every shop was turned into a treasure house for the accumulation of commodities and provisions of the first necessity. The Government, with its hoards of grain and material for the support of the armies, joined in the struggle for existence. The average price of provisions rose to three times what it had been in 1791, while the average consumption was largely



reduced. The farmers, except under extreme pressure from taxation and Government requisitions, could not be induced to part with their grain in exchange for assignats, and the Government had to come to the assistance of private traders. The sustenance of Paris thus fell upon the nation, and rations were throughout the Revolution served out to the citizens of the capital. Subventions to the bakers and butchers enabled them to buy provisions from without and to sell at a price which, when 100 livres assignats were equal to two or three livres in coin, is represented by the statement that 100 livres in paper were worth from six to fourteen in coin in the operations of retail trade.<sup>1</sup> This, when labourers were paid in paper worth from a quarter to half its nominal value and officials and public creditors in paper at its full nominal value, meant a struggle for life of which Paris at this time presented a terrible picture. Crowds of people stood all night at the doors of the Treasury, of the shops, and of the places appointed for the doles of food; workmen diminished their hours of labour from want of strength to work longer, nor could strength be expected where life was constantly supported upon the most disgusting offal.

The decline of the population was both the cause and the sign of the diminished wealth and productiveness of the country. Mallet du Pan's estimates are probably in excess of the truth,—he stated that

<sup>1</sup> Thus in February 1796 a dinner for two persons at the Palais Royal cost 1,500 francs in assignats, and for twenty, 20,000 francs a course; in a *fiacre*, 6,000 francs; a loaf of bread, 80; a pound of meat, 60; a pound of candles, 180; and a bottle of wine, 100 francs (Lady Blennerhassett's *Madame de Staël*, vol. ii., p. 278, French edition).

the population had decreased from 26,000,000 to 18,000,000—but in the absence of adequate data for a calculation, the maintenance of armies beyond the frontier, the losses caused by emigration, war and famine, and the utter neglect of the hospitals and charitable institutions, were all causes of the decrease of the adult male population which Lord Malmesbury noticed in his journey through the North of France. Mallet testifies to the *vide immense* of men and the want of hands in the industrial pursuits, and the Government admitted the fact by the leave granted to the troops quartered in the interior to take part in the operations of the harvest.<sup>1</sup> Even more serious, especially in its political aspect, was the decimation of the upper classes of France by death, ruin and emigration. The rate of interest, which before the Revolution had stood at 4 or 6 per cent. *per annum*, rose during its course to 6 or 8, and never sank below 2 per cent. *per month*; credit was indeed destroyed, and no branch of industry escaped the general decay.

“No people were ever put to so cruel a test, none ever expiated their faults by greater sufferings; a capital of thirty milliards is becoming worthless in the very hands of its possessors; industry, commerce and

<sup>1</sup> M. Taine, in his volume on the Revolution, adduces some valuable evidence on this point. He estimates the probable deaths from privation at more than a million, and quotes the calculation of M. Léonce de Lavergne that another million perished in war from 1792 to 1800. Bordeaux lost a tenth of its population, Rheims an eighth, and Lyons, after the siege, was reduced from 130,000 to 80,000 inhabitants. Against these losses must be set the very noticeable increase in the infantile population resulting from early marriages.

labour of every kind are destroyed at their source ; the needs of the war have depopulated the empire, misery has no limits, famine again besieges Paris. . . . Miserable skeletons daily fall dead of starvation in the streets, the distribution of bread presents the aspect of a siege, and the approaches to the bakers' shops resemble a field of battle."<sup>1</sup>

"Like the Louisiana savage who cuts down the tree in order to gather the fruit," like a "spendthrift dissipating his patrimony," the Directory devoured the resources of the country with a profound indifference to any object but that of maintaining their own power. If peace for the allies meant a warrant of insurrection to their populations, much more for France would it have meant a revolt of the people and the armies against the authority of their rulers. '*Nous serions perdus si nous faisons la paix,*' said Sieyès;<sup>2</sup> the only hope of the Directory lay in the vigorous and unscrupulous prosecution of the war ; and their system had all the force of a fundamental dogma, a policy of State, an object of fanaticism, and a result of necessity.

"This pretended Government treats France as Lord Clive treated the Hindus. They have accustomed the country to every kind of exaction and to the expectation of still worse things. . . . They fear the return of the generals and armies into the interior, they carry on a war of insolent proselytism into which they have imported every upstart passion, nor does it require much reasoning to perceive that a faction which is also a sect, which has founded a Republic upon the hatred and destruction of kings, which has overturned an ancient Monarchy, massacred a royal house,

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence for Vienna*, i., 370.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii., 49.



and founded its policy as well as its security upon the extension of its destroying principles, will only lay down its arms when it has no longer the strength to carry them."

From the very beginning the party attacked in the Brunswick Manifesto had retaliated by a propaganda of their principles in the camp and country of the enemy, and the Girondists, the principal authors of the war, were the first to formulate this policy. The realisation of the scheme of "philosophic conquests" had been interrupted for a moment by the Jacobin rule and by the death struggle of factions within the Convention, and Danton, the most nearly allied of the Jacobins to the Gironde, alone seems to have had a definite conception of foreign policy. The Revolution of Thermidor brought to the front the remains of the Gironde. Of this party Mallet observes, that—

"neither the horrors of that sanguinary *régime* nor the oppression under which they groaned during the dictatorship of the Committee of Public Safety, neither their misfortunes nor the death of so many of their number upon the scaffold, neither experience nor reason nor the duty of closing the bleeding wounds of their country and of giving her peace, had touched these theorists. They would sooner see the universe in ashes than abandon their design of submitting it to their doctrines. *On peut tenter, on peut espérer la conversion d'un scélérat, jamais celle d'un philosophe.*"<sup>1</sup>

The foreign policy of the Directory was characterised by the philosophic insolence, the spirit of proselytism, and the desire of universal revolution which animated this sect. The Decree of Fraternisation of 1792 was

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence for Vienna*, i., 152.

followed with literal exactness by the Directory in every country into which their armies could penetrate. All the authorities—so ran that famous document—the nobles and priestly classes, as well as every privilege contrary to equality, were to be suppressed. All taxes and former sources of revenue were to be remitted, property was to be placed under the administration of the invaders to guarantee the expenses of the war, while to aid them in regaining their liberty the republican coinage was to be placed at their disposal. The people were then to be summoned to primary assemblies, to elect their civil and military magistrates under the surveillance of Conventional commissioners. No plan was too gigantic for the dreams of the Directory, none too extravagantly immoral to be proclaimed to their intended victims. They aimed at nothing short of a peace which should overturn the rights of nations; but they hoped to arrive at such a peace by effecting partial pacifications, and endeavouring in this way to split up the coalition opposed to them. Powers thus neutralised were treated rather as vassals and satellites of the Great Republic than as independent States; and the Directory is found protesting, on the one hand, that the Swedish *people* may always count on their feelings of affection, and, on the other, insisting on the expulsion of French *émigrés* from Savoy or of the British minister from Switzerland. The arms of the Directory did not constitute half the danger which their enemies had to fear. The rule of the French envoys in the smaller neutral States was compared to that of the Pashas in Turkish provinces. Their mission was to stir up by every means dissatisfaction among the people against their rulers, and so prepare

the ground for the entry of the troops who were to complete the work. Every country which had the misfortune to be in diplomatic relations with France received in its midst trained Jacobins who, using their official character as a cloak, turned their legation or consulate into a meeting-place for traitors and conspirators.

The allied Powers were little fitted for a contest with such enemies. "When Europe was invaded by 200,000 barbarians it was not nearly so incapable of offering a resistance as it has now become by its own act." The balance of power had been overthrown by the Revolution. During the preceding century it had been possible for either of the German Powers to stand single-handed against France, for Austria in the War of Succession, and Prussia in the seven years' War, had held their own against their German rival and France combined. The immense accession of territory to the French State now exposed Germany to the full force of attack from the north and west, for the intervening bulwarks of Belgium, Holland, and the German provinces west of the Rhine no longer existed. The double position of Austria as a German State and as head of the Empire was another source of weakness, and the correspondence of Mallet was intended to strengthen Colleredo as against Thugut, to inspire an imperial as opposed to a narrowly selfish national policy. The enthusiasm of the French found no counterpart in the policy of the allies. Defence is usually weaker than attack, and the championship of the principles of social and political order, although a task which appealed to the sympathies of a Gentz or a Burke, could not be expected to awaken a response



among princes who displayed heroic insensibility to the general interests, or among populations whose condition was in many cases worse than that of the French before the Revolution. The leaders of Germany were unable even to appeal with effect to the sentiment which in the long run was to prove fatal to French ascendancy—the national patriotism of the people; they persisted in their stupid and selfish schemes of aggrandisement and of the annihilation of France as a political power, at a time when Europe was being devoured “bit by bit like the leaves of an artichoke” by the great Republic. Amid conditions which both for France and Europe had totally changed, they continued to fight as they had fought all through the century, and to make war upon a nation ‘*frénétique et désocialisée*,’ on the basis which they had employed in the struggle against Louis XIV.

The correspondence is full of the boldest criticism of the ambiguity of conduct, the uncertainty of principle, “the effeminate presumption without measure in its terror or its confidence” which constituted the policy of the allies. Of all the errors of that policy none were more fatal than the connection with the *émigrés*, whom Burke has described as “a well-informed, sensible, ingenious, high-principled, and spirited body of cavaliers,” and in whose restoration, together with that of the *ancien régime*, he placed his chief hopes of a counter-revolution in France. Mallet, as we know, estimated very differently their capacity and judgment. An expedition like that of Quiberon could have been undertaken only by men totally ignorant of the feeling of France, and he has no words strong enough to blame their wrongheadedness, their

egotism, their folly, their want of character and good sense.

“As absurd as on the first day of the Revolution, they have learnt only how to march to the prison or the scaffold, a contemptible and servile virtue which will never embarrass their tyrants. . . . We look in France for a leader of force and wisdom. We find a king buried at Verona, passing his days in retirement and self-effacement, the first prince of the blood established at Holyrood, a military command in the hands of a third who is far too feeble to inspire any feeling of terror or confidence, and whose absolute spirit and plan of counter-revolution by force of arms repel three-fourths of the partisans of the throne. We find obscure and imbecile agents employed without discernment. . . . The obstinate notion,” he continues, “of recovering France by miserable attacks in detail, by theatrical plots, by means of the *chouans* who are permitted to attack all who have not assumed the livery of Coblenz, the absence of all object, of all leadership, of any principle of concentration, the absurd idea that the nation will rise against its representatives to set up the old *régime*, the total ignorance of what is to be hoped or feared from the war, the constant neglect of all means of persuasion or of policy, the contrast so often apparent between operations from the exterior and events in the interior : ”<sup>1</sup>

—such are the faults which Mallet signalises as those which will lead, if anything can, to the establishment of the Republic in France. In these lines we have more than a criticism, we have an indication of a policy which Mallet never ceased to press upon the Powers. He had endeavoured to measure with accuracy the real sentiments of the French, and to

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence for Vienna*, ii., 21.

reveal to the Emperor, in his careful analyses, the actual strength of the anti-Jacobin elements in France. The conclusion he constantly maintained was that the vast majority was unfavourable to the Revolutionary Government, that their only articulate motives were a desire for the return of peace, of plenty, and of prosperity, a hatred of foreigners, and a dread of the restoration of the old *régime*. The former government was, he said, as much "effaced in public opinion as that of Clovis". It is the same with feudalism, with the power and popularity of the Church, and with a thousand usages "as totally buried as though they had never existed". Mallet was in absolute disagreement with Burke, as little acquainted at this time with the public opinion of France as he had been blind to its condition before the Revolution, in his estimate of the necessity or possibility of a restoration of the old order in France. He attached no superstitious importance to any one form of government. A born republican would hardly, like Burke, find an argument upon the danger of a republic as a neighbour, and we find him declaring that whether the Government were monarchical or republican mattered little: it was the Revolution with which it was impossible to treat. Mallet, however, like Mirabeau, came early to the conclusion that in France the monarchy was "the only anchor of safety"; and he saw among the people no such prejudice against a modified and constitutional form of monarchical government as existed against the *ancien régime*. But if the people would accept, they would and could do nothing of themselves to bring about a counter-revolution of whatever kind. '*Jamais un pareil peuple ne s'arrachera de lui-même au joug qu'il s'est donné.*' The



necessary impulse might, Mallet hoped, be given by the action either of the allies or of the *chouans*, by means of the foreign or of the civil war. But all hope from the royalist insurgents had been lost from the moment when they took up arms without waiting for the time when they could have acted as the auxiliaries of a party in the legislative body, in Paris, or in the country. Disconnected risings in pursuance of plans dictated from abroad, brigandage practised by the rebels upon all who had not totally abjured the Revolution, upon constitutional priests and Royalists, upon peasants and townsmen, had led to a system of bloody reprisals, to the discredit of the royalist cause, and finally to the destruction of the rebels themselves. A combined and well-supported movement and some rapid successes might have placed the Vendéans in a position to avail themselves of the moral resources offered by the state of France. By a formal proclamation to the people, and to the Assembly, they should have demanded a free convocation of the primary Assemblies, and laid before them for decision the question between Monarchy and the Revolution. Some such policy as this would more seriously have embarrassed the Government than any number of battles, and given a *point d'appui* to the reactionary feeling of the country.

Whatever criticism applied to the conduct of the civil war applied with even greater force to the conduct of the foreign war. The allies should have appeared not as principals but as auxiliaries of a party in France, not as enemies of the nation but as enemies of a faction. The '*folle manie de batailler*' should have had no place in their councils. Not a step should have been taken without full consideration of its effects in France,

without concert with the counter-revolutionary leaders in the country. "Never will the people recognise a king given them by their enemies." They should have relied upon moral means rather than upon arms. Again and again Mallet counsels the issuing of proclamations which should reassure the French as to the intention of the allies, and dispel their prejudice that the Powers would pretend to dictate the laws or government under which they were to live, or that they were armed for the restoration of the *ancien régime*. He insisted that it would be all over with the Republic if the Powers could reduce the question to the solemn and definite alternative of peace and monarchy, or war and republicanism ; and that such a declaration, supported by strong defensive measures on the Rhine and a succession of short and sympathetic exhortations, would reveal to the people a possibility of ending their miseries, and encourage the Royalists to organise a combined movement.

It was the same policy which Mallet du Pan had urged and recommended from the very beginning of the war. He continued to recommend it with a persistence and even hopefulness which cannot but strike the reader of this Correspondence, and which has led some of his critics to condemn his advocacy of an "impossible" policy,<sup>1</sup> his adherence to a hopeless cause, as evidence of a want of practical sagacity. Yet it is precisely as a practical policy on the part of one who saw that the Republic meant anarchy, and who knew that a return to despotism could not be a final solution, that both Mallet's adherence to the idea of a Constitutional

<sup>1</sup> "Conseil fort raisonnable sans doute, mais dont on peut se demander s'il était bien exécutable." G. Valette.

Monarchy and his action as regards the war are capable of defence.

Theoretically, of course, nothing could be more unsound than the policy of foreign interference, for no maxim in politics seems more indisputable than that one nation should not interfere in the domestic disputes of another. Nothing could have been more imprudent than for the King to traffic with foreign Powers. But the war was none of the King's making, nor, as we have seen, of Mallet's counselling. It must be borne in mind that Mallet did not go to Frankfort until Louis XVI. had made every effort to prevent the war, and he himself had done all that was possible to point out its dangers. The allies were approaching as enemies whether the King interfered or not, the revolutionary parties in the capital were pressing forward to destroy him, and his only chance lay in attempting to play the part of a mediator. Peace being out of the question, it only remained for one who, unlike Rivarol, refused to stand aside to counsel the conduct of the war upon reasonable and intelligible principles. Mallet could not foresee the strategical blundering by which, in its opening stages, Brunswick and Coburg were to make its success impossible. It may be admitted that he deceived himself as to the effect the war would have in uniting public opinion in France against the foreign enemy. He was wrong in thinking that the timid and long-suffering majority would revolt against the Jacobin rule. He was mistaken in his view of the objects of the allies. But months before this correspondence opened any such illusions had finally disappeared, and in 1795 he confessed that a general peace was the best thing to be hoped for. During the spring and summer



of that year, when Prussia and Spain made terms with the Republic and Sweden and Naples courted her friendship ; when the armies of France, exhausted by her gigantic efforts, and those of Austria, engrossed in the Polish imbroglio and impervious to British exhortations and subsidies, stood idly opposite to each other on the Rhine, such a peace seemed in sight and with it the restoration of Constitutional Monarchy in France. The grand opportunity, not for want of advice from Mallet du Pan, was missed, and by the end of the year it was evident that the struggle between France and Austria was to be renewed in a more menacing and portentous form than before.

Mallet had long foreseen such a development which was to end only with the creation of a new Europe, a Continent transformed in a national and military sense ; and so far from his persistence in counselling the effective prosecution of the war, and in endeavouring to convince the Austrian Government against its will of the real character of the struggle, being a sign of want of practical sagacity, it is, in fact, a proof of enlightened statesmanship. That he should have lost faith in the will and capacity of the allied Governments and of the Princes of the royal house of France to terminate the convulsion was natural, it was indeed justified by all the facts ; but it throws into still stronger relief the loyalty, consistency and courage with which he continued to maintain their cause, and the cause of constitutional order and freedom.

The events of 1796, indeed, tested these qualities to the uttermost, and reduced him to a state of mind something like despair. His comments on the progress of the Italian campaign show how fully he realised

what the French successes threatened for the European powers. '*L'Europe est finie*,' he had exclaimed on hearing of the Peace of Bâle. The Italian campaign, he confessed, finally led him to abandon all hope that the allies would ever unite in good faith against the common enemy. "Two hundred thousand barbarians," he wrote in May 1796, "once invaded the Roman Empire which had the advantage of unity, science, discipline, entrenchments and fortifications. To-day six hundred thousand barbarians are swarming over a multitude of decrepit and divided States governed by marionettes of *papier mâché*." To De Castries he observed in July that Europe had reached the end prophesied in vain by him during the last four years. "She must pass under the yoke and assume the *bonnet rouge*, or fight; and fight she will not except on the retreat. This is the first moment since the origin of the Revolution at which all hope and all courage have abandoned me." To another he wrote: "Whether the King takes up his residence in the North or the South, on the Rhine or the Neva, appears to me absolutely unimportant. They will come back to the monarchy, but probably neither you nor I shall witness that event." And, in spite of the brilliant and unexpected victories of the Archduke Charles over Jourdan on the Danube, and the retreat of Moreau which saved the Empire by frustrating Bonaparte's daring plan to meet the two generals with his Italian army in the heart of Germany, he wrote in November to Gallatin: "The future is more black with clouds than ever before". But he kept all the time a brave front in his official correspondence, and speculated hopefully on the military results of the successes of the Archduke.

Early in the same year, just before the victories of Bonaparte, Mallet du Pan had given expression to the views we have followed in his correspondence in the only writing<sup>1</sup> he had published since 1793. His object in penning this fragment, an introduction to a projected series of letters, was to say what a crowd of discerning people in Paris dared not say for themselves, and to speak with such emphasis and force that the Directory should be unable to keep it out of the country. Nothing that he ever wrote surpasses this pamphlet in scathing eloquence. I need not dwell on the denunciation, never more powerfully drawn, of the revolutionary methods and leaders which was intended to rouse the Parisian public to a sense of their own degradation, and to a recognition of the tyranny to which the Revolution was inevitably tending. But it is impossible to pass over the passages which read like an answer to the *Considérations*<sup>2</sup> in which Joseph de Maistre had exalted the wisdom of the Declaration of Verona, repudiated any transaction with revolutionary opinion, and thereby placed fresh arms in the ignorant and prejudiced hands of the *Jacobins d'aristocratie*. In language no less elevated than that of the champion of absolutism, he demonstrated for the hundredth time the hopelessness of the attempt to lead the people of France back to the twelfth century, to rebuild with the

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondance politique pour servir à l'histoire du Republicanisme Français*; published in the spring of 1796, with the motto, "Monstrum horrendum informe ingens cui lumen ademptum". It was published in Switzerland, and at once reprinted in Paris, where it went through three editions in two months, being openly sold in the Palais Royal, with the applause of all parties except the Jacobins.

<sup>2</sup> Also published in 1796.



dust of the *ancien régime* the solid palace of their ancestors. Granted that the royal domination over a people which had accepted with fickle acquiescence one usurpation after another might, if it were once re-established, be maintained, where was the force, where were the armies, the treasure, the prestige which could re-establish it? How could the Revolution be dethroned but at the hands of the nation itself, and what meaning did the Vendean device, "God and the King," convey to the immense majority of French citizens who had shared in the errors and the actions, the crimes and the advantages of the Revolution? Again did Mallet affirm the conviction that of all the causes which had contributed to the energy of the Revolution and prolonged its duration the foreign war had been paramount. As a result of it the Republic, by a strange contradiction, was about to be adopted and recognised in the political hierarchy at the moment when in France itself both rulers and ruled were confessing the impossibility of maintaining the Republican *régime*. The struggle had worn out France but not the Revolution; it had proved what was in doubt in 1792, that the Revolution was stronger than Europe. Never had the writer exposed in more masterly phrases the errors which had brought Europe to the alternative of an eternal war or a disastrous peace with a faithless but indomitable adversary. A comparison of modern Europe with the Greeks of the lower Empire brings the melancholy review to a close. The anarchy of men's minds, he declared, had killed public spirit, as cosmopolitanism and the multiplicity of interests had destroyed all common national sentiment. '*Périsset le genre humain pourvu que je reste debout sur ses ruines avec mes*

*loisirs, mon or, et mes amusements. Voilà le patriotisme du 18<sup>me</sup> siècle !*<sup>1</sup>

This pamphlet is remarkable among Mallet's writings for its almost complete absence of positive advice and guidance.<sup>2</sup> The moral was perhaps too plain to need developing. But the whole utterance is that of a man profoundly and justly discouraged, speaking no less to satisfy his own pent-up emotions than to rouse others to exertion. To see the peril, to point it out, to be unable to prevent his friends from courting and inviting it, to watch the fulfilment in ever-increasing measure of his worst anticipations, had been and was still to be the lot of Mallet du Pan ; to drink deep of the cup so bitter to the few in every generation who are at once loyal and far-sighted. No wonder that his work from this time took a deeper tinge of despondency

<sup>1</sup> Similar reflections were suggested to him in 1798 by the spectacle of the cowardice of the Swiss Government and magistracy contrasted with the warlike energy of the intrepid peasantry and people (letter to De Pradt, 17th Feb.). "A force d'urbanité, d'épicurisme, de mollesse, tout ce qui est riche, grand de naissance, propriétaire, homme comme il faut, est absolument *détrempé*. Il n'y a plus ni sang, ni sentiment, ni dignité, ni raison, ni capacité. L'amour du repos est le seul instinct qui leur reste, ce sont les Indiens que les Mogols trouvent couchés sur des feuilles de palmier au moment où ils viennent les exterminer et les piller. Lorsque les nations en sont là, il faut qu'elles périssent. Le Gouvernement en Europe était depuis trente ans une mascarade : on allait par le mouvement imprimé ; mais au premier choc ces vieilles machines sont tombés en poudre, et l'on a vu combien elles étaient creuses."

<sup>2</sup> Malouet reproached him for leaving no hope and suggesting no remedies. "As an historian," he wrote, "you have no doubt the right to pronounce judgment ; and I am much of your opinion. But you are no longer an historian, you are a councillor of the European Diet" (Malouet's *Memoirs*, vol. ii., pp. 466 and 468).

while gaining in authority and sombre power. To contemporaries impatient of a speedy issue out of their afflictions there was little comfort to be obtained from his words. While it was still true that he believed that the Revolution would end in a Restoration (and time showed that he was right), it was in no sense true that he believed it to be imminent.

“It is in vain,” he said,<sup>1</sup> “to count on the fall of the Republic. Those who consider that the ‘imperishable’ Republic will perish in time are certainly right; but if they mean that its fall in the more or less remote future will save Europe, if they fancy that everything will suddenly change from black to white, they are mistaken, for the Republic of to-day may be succeeded by a monarchical or dictatorial Republic. Who can tell? In twenty years a nation in ferment may give a hundred different forms to such a Revolution.”

To students of the Revolution his writings become increasingly valuable, and this pamphlet is full of instruction with its serried arguments, its command of philosophic maxim and historical analogy, its indignant eloquence. In England it would have secured for its author the posthumous fame of a Burke; in France it has remained to this day unnoticed and unquoted.

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence for Vienna*, Letter of 29th May 1796.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE 18TH OF FRUCTIDOR—EXPULSION FROM SWITZERLAND—WINTER AT FRIBURG.

1797.

“YOUR last book has not pleased your friends as much as your other writings ; they say that you wrote it in a rage.” Thus reported Mallet’s son from London of the pamphlet just described ; they were no less dissatisfied with another which shortly followed it and which breathed a different spirit. The *Lettre à un Ministre d’État*, published in March 1797, was a masterly sketch of the diplomatic and military situation of the Continent, and of the policy of the Directors, the ‘five vizirs *qui d’une main tiennent la tête sanglante d’un roi, en recevant de l’autre les suppliques de l’Europe*’. Again he insisted on the boundless and redoubtable ambition of the French Government, again he attempted to warn Austria and England against falling into the trap of separate negotiation with the Republic, and to point out the danger to which each of these nations was exposed. He showed in the case of Austria how the conquests in Italy and their developments would decide the fate of the Rhine and of a divided and discordant Germany ; and he described the designs of the Directory against England in terms which doubtless appeared exaggerated, but which, as the event proved, were little short

of prophetic. With a Government animated by the principles which he painted in colours lurid but exact no terms were possible, and there was no safety for Europe so long as she remained governed by egotistic motives and in perpetual conflict with herself. '*Il n'y a pas un instant à perdre*,' he wrote, '*nous touchons à l'heure des repentirs ; celle de la préservation s'éloigne à pas précipités.*'

None of Mallet du Pan's appeals to public opinion met with less response than this call for vigorous action and statesmanship, but none was more speedily justified by events. His son, who had been in England since November 1796, engaged, as he said, in the "sicken- ing occupation" of soliciting employment, has left the following description of his *émigré* friends and their opinions at this time :—

"I was received,"<sup>1</sup> he writes, "with open arms by a large circle consisting chiefly of Constitutional Royalists. . . . Malouet and Montlosier considered me almost in the light of a son, and a day seldom passed without my seeing them. I met at Malouet's house, and also at the house of Princesse d'Hénin, who lived under the same roof with Lally, and had a regular evening circle, many distinguished emigrants : the Archbishop of Bordeaux (Cicé), who was *Garde des Sceaux* in the year 1790, a shrewd, sensible man ; the Baron de Gilliers ; the Chevalier de Panat ; the Chevalier de Grave, a Constitutional minister—all clever men. The Prince de Poix (Noailles), a Constitutionalist, who had been captain of the king's guard ; the Comte (now Duc) de Duras, of a great family, highly accomplished, and of fine manners. Such was the respect entertained for my father by all those persons, many of them of great rank, and not a

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*

few of distinguished talents, that they treated me during my stay in England with a degree of kindness and consideration to which I had no sort of personal claim. I was assailed on my arrival with questions as to the state of public opinion in France, and particularly at Paris ; and it was pretty clear that my friends were on the look-out for such circumstances as would enable them to make their peace with any Government *de facto* founded on moderate principles. If Saint-Evremond, petted as he was in England by the monarch and the court, sighed for his Paris society, what must have been the feelings of the French emigrants ; who, although assisted as a body of suffering loyalists, had been constantly kept at arm's length by Mr. Pitt ; had not been treated with any favour either by the court or the royal family, and saw a war, avowedly of *principle*, almost exclusively directed to British objects. They did not therefore conceal their just and laudable gratification that the Convention, however hateful in its excesses, should have asserted and secured the independence of their native land."

There was great exultation among them at Bonaparte's military successes<sup>1</sup> ; they imagined that the Restoration they longed for would come about through his means, and they looked forward to the elections which were to take place in the spring of 1797, for another third of the councils, as a sort of era in their affairs. They were therefore not at all in the mood to acquiesce in Mallet du Pan's gloomy views, and rather took the

<sup>1</sup> "Tu n'as pas une idée," J. L. Mallet writes to his father, "du degré d'admiration de MM. Lally, de Poix, Macpherson, Montlosier pour Bonaparte, et pour les grands hommes de la France actuelle ; César n'est qu'un écolier à côté du moderne vainqueur d'Italie. Ils sont profondément las de l'émigration." "Moins fier que vous," writes Malouet, "je m'accommoderais avec toutes les républiques du monde à la seule condition de finir tranquillement mes jours dans mon pays !"



son to task for his father's opinions. Malouet himself blamed the energy of his friend's anathemas, urged him to show a more conciliatory disposition to the existing institutions of France, and even remonstrated seriously with him for his continued support of the legitimate King. Mallet du Pan retorted that the dread his friends entertained of a return to absolute monarchy in France was gradually bringing them over to the scheme of a republic!

It would have been strange indeed if, with his knowledge of opinion in France and of the methods of the Jacobins on the one hand and of the Royalists on the other, Mallet du Pan had shared the pacific illusions of his London friends. '*Nous avons vu vingt fois le port,*' he wrote to De Castries, '*et la tempête rejette sans cesse notre barque en pleine mer.*' But he did not despair, and with great spirit he threw himself into the internal struggle in Paris which was threatening the existence of the Directory, only, however, to prepare for himself another and this time a final disappointment.<sup>1</sup> By May 1797 the reaction became so

<sup>1</sup> A curious letter to his friend, Saladin, about this time shows his hopes. "Vous verrez," he says, "cet échafaudage de gouvernement tomber en ruines au pied du trône, ou s'abîmer dans l'anarchie. . . . Plus nous avançons, plus j'observe le caractère national et sa tendance, et plus je me persuade que la monarchie sera rétablie à l'improviste sans que les tâtonneurs, les politiques, les essayeurs constitutionnels aient le temps d'achever leurs expériences." Windham, who saw this letter, thought on the contrary that "the victorious Republic would gradually establish itself in a way that, though subject to many convulsions and many changes, it will not be finally overturned. I shall listen with great delight to any one who will furnish me with the hope for a contrary event, and derive considerable comfort from finding that such is the opinion of a person so well acquainted

pronounced that he allowed himself to dwell upon the possibility of success, and formed plans for his own return to France and the re-establishment of the *Mercure*. His son, who had travelled through France in the preceding autumn, and who returned to Paris in June 1797, thus described the situation as he found it :—

“How far the Revolution was to recede, to what point of its career it would be brought back, was the question every one was asking himself. The executive Government, most of the generals, and Bonaparte—in himself a host—were on the side of the Revolution, and pledged to its results. On the other hand a great mass of property, of talent, and even some great military names, such as Pichegru and Moreau, were inclined for a limited monarchy, and were endeavouring by their exertions and influence, but without avowing their ultimate object, to obtain a repeal of the more obnoxious revolutionary laws, and to displace the revolutionary leaders. Others again, particularly at Paris and in great commercial towns, wearied of war and political dissensions, longed for any Government disposed to a compromise, and to measures of conciliation towards the classes that had so severely suffered.

“... Nothing could exceed the contempt and hatred with which the Government seemed to be held by the great mass of the people ; nor did any one attempt to conceal it. At the *tables d'hôte*, the terms of *gueux*, *brigands*, etc., were freely applied to the ‘five kings,’ the members of the Directory. At Moisselles, near Paris, the inn-keeper called out to a boy in the yard to see whether the ducks had been fed, and being answered in the affirmative, he then inquired for the *représentans* ; and we found that the *dindons* (turkeys) had been dignified with the title of Representatives of the People !”

with the French character, with the actual state of affairs in France, and with all the circumstances of the Revolution, as M. Mallet du Pan.”

But he saw also that this feeling was "unconnected with any disposition to question the authority of these degraded rulers. The Revolution had crushed all resistance."<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the press was in full cry against the Government, and violent and frivolous as was the tone of papers like *Le Thé*, *Le Menteur*, *Le Journal des Rieurs*, they faithfully represented public opinion. The result of the elections, a crushing defeat of the Directory, was a demonstration, in the words of Royer Collard one of the most distinguished of the newly elected candidates, that the country desired the "definitive and absolute proscription of the revolutionary monster". The majority of the two Councils, thus transformed, found themselves in absolute antagonism to the Directorial executive, and a deadlock was produced with which, as Necker had foreseen, the Constitution had provided no machinery to deal. Mallet commented at this time on the distorted constitutionalism which had substituted independence for separation of functions, and contrasted the working of the British constitution with that of the Directory.<sup>2</sup> He realised at once that the only solution was the employment of force: '*le sabre des soldats fera taire l'artillerie des langues et des plumes*'.<sup>3</sup> The death struggle between the two parties was protracted by the powerlessness of either to strike the other down. For a time indeed it seemed that the opposition had a chance of a successful military coup. "Paris," wrote Mallet to Sainte-Aldegonde (29th July), "is in

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences*.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Vienna, 19th July 1797.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Sainte-Aldegonde, 29th April 1797.



the midst of a crisis which will ripen our affairs or throw them back indefinitely. . . . Pichegru is abhorred by the Jacobins. Remember what I told you of this general two years ago : note that he will play an immense part, and that all our hopes are in him. The people have given him their confidence, and will march joyfully under his orders. We are sure of 25,000 resolute men in Paris alone." That Pichegru with his great reputation might have organised some such force is certain.

"Peuchet," wrote the younger Mallet, "than whom no man is better acquainted with the impulses that put in motion a Paris mob, has repeatedly told me that an insurrection might have been got up for that purpose with a few thousand pounds. But the proposal of the reorganisation of the *Garde Bourgeoise* came too late, and was not well received ; and as to revolutionary measures, the better part of the Royalists probably had shunned them."<sup>1</sup>

There was indeed the usual want of concert between the Royalists of the Opposition. Nothing short of a complete restoration would have satisfied the Bourbons or induced them to countenance any movement in their favour, and no man of influence in the Councils would have lent himself to so desperate a scheme, although Pichegru,<sup>2</sup> Imbert Colomès, Camille

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*

<sup>2</sup> After the 18 Fructidor, Pichegru was arrested and deported to Cayenne with other members of the Moderate party, for the days of bloody executions were over. The ship which carried him, however, was captured and brought to England, a circumstance which saved him from the fate of some of his friends, Barthélemy, Mallet's old opponent at Berne, among the number, who died of pestilential evils. J. L. Mallet writes : "I knew something of Pichegru in Eng-

Jordan, and others, were disposed to go to greater length than members such as Thibaudeau and Boissy d'Anglas, who had drunk deep of the revolutionary cup, and were not ready to dash it down.<sup>1</sup> The Councils, heedless of their own divisions and of the formidable enmities they had aroused, went on repealing revolutionary decrees, curtailing the resources of the Directory and calling for peace, without taking any effective steps to organise their victory.

land many years afterwards, and previously to the last attempt which brought him to his untimely end. He was ill surrounded here by those extremely inferior to him—Royalist *desperadoes*, who lived on his bounty. He was a good-natured, generous-minded man, of the greatest simplicity of mind and manners; but of no great sagacity, whose early military habits had inured him to a rough sort of society. I heard at that time from his friend, Major Rusillon, that the French princes pressed upon him the necessity of making no compromise with the Revolution in case he should succeed; but that he plainly told them that he would not concur in any measures which had not for object the establishment of a constitutional and limited form of government. The Archduke Charles, much to his credit, had placed a large sum of money at Pichegru's disposal at a banker's in London for his expenses during his residence here, and I understood that Pichegru had availed himself of this generous provision to the extent of £1,500 a year.

“Barthélemy, who had been Minister of the Interior, had ordered some plants of the bread-tree which were growing in the hot-houses of the Jardin des Plantes to be sent to Cayenne. When at sea with his distinguished and unfortunate companions, and being ignorant of their joint destination, Barthélemy saw on board the ship the plants he had ordered for Cayenne; a circumstance which removed all further doubt.”

<sup>1</sup> “Il y a tout à craindre,” Mallet wrote to Vienna, “de cette classe d'idiots et d'équilibristes qui dans les Conseils jouent le rôle de danseurs de corde et, opinant sans cesse pour les tempéraments, finiront par culbuter leur Assemblée et se casser le cou à eux-mêmes.”

The Directory, or rather Barras and two of his colleagues, had on their side all but public opinion. They had unity of purpose, and the old Jacobins still organised and roused to a pitch of fury by the inconsiderate proceedings of the Royalists; above all they had the armies of Bonaparte in Italy and Hoche in the Vendée openly proclaiming their defection from the legislative body hitherto all-powerful in France, and their readiness to march to the assistance of the Directory.

With all his confidence in Pichegru Mallet du Pan was fully alive to the fact that the Directory could rely on a greater figure than that general. Weeks before, in letters to Sainte-Aldegonde (29th April and 7th May) he had written: "You will see the reaction of the Austrian peace in the interior. Hoche and his Franks, Bonaparte and his Vandals, will be let loose on France; they will make short work I promise you of mutinous journalists, orators, legislators and citizens. . . . The Directory and the Republicans count on Bonaparte to re-establish them."<sup>1</sup> These anticipations proved correct; the Directory turned first to Hoche, and brought him to Paris in July as Minister of War, but the Councils managed to get rid of him on the technical ground that he was under the legal age for

<sup>1</sup> After Fructidor, and again after Brumaire, the Royalists clung to the idea that Bonaparte would play the part of Monk. Mallet du Pan never shared this idea, although he had in the preceding March compared the condition of France to that of England after Cromwell's death. "Son ambition dépasse de beaucoup ses lumières, il est sans vertu, sans honneur, sans probité, sans bonne foi . . . il y a loin de ce caractère de celui du sage Monk. . . . Pichegru était honnête homme. Nous ne le retrouverons de longtemps" (Letter to Marshal de Castries, 5th Oct. 1797).



that office ; and finally Bonaparte came to their assistance by despatching from Italy Augereau, who arrived in Paris proclaiming that he " had been sent to kill the Royalists ! " The *coup d'État* of the 18th of Fructidor followed in due course ; the victory remained in the hands of the Republicans, but the Republic itself had received its death-blow. " One thing only is certain," wrote Mallet du Pan,<sup>1</sup> " namely, that the 18th of Fructidor has destroyed the Republic and the constitution by overturning the fundamental system of the sovereignty of the people and of the national representation."

Mallet du Pan, as we have seen, was one of the first to perceive that the probable outcome of the Revolution would be a dictatorship. The 13th of Vendémiaire had been ominous for the fate of the Republic as the first occasion on which military force had been summoned to the assistance of the civil power, the 18th of Fructidor repeated the warning in still more emphatic fashion, and a month later he wrote :<sup>2</sup> " In any case I see that we are destined sooner or later to pass through the terrors of anarchy to a military usurpation ". No more accurate forecast of the history of the remaining months of the century could have been penned. But while Mallet thus perceived the imminence of a dictatorship, he failed to distinguish the dictator in the marked fashion which might have been expected. " Dictatorship is in the air, but woe to the rash man who aspires to the fatal crown ! Bonaparte himself simulates modesty

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence for Vienna*, letter of 6th Oct. 1797.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to De Castries, 5th Oct. 1797.

and unconcern; devoured by a boundless ambition he is reduced to disguise it.”<sup>1</sup>

Mallet du Pan has, indeed, been severely and somewhat unjustly criticised for his supposed failure to recognise the one figure which for all after history gives the keynote of this chaotic period. He does not even mention Bonaparte's share in the *coup d'État* of Vendémiaire, and his railing remarks on the conduct of the campaign of 1796 read strangely enough in the light of later events and betray but little appreciation of the fact that, by his military and diplomatic achievements in Italy, Bonaparte had definitely taken his place in history.

‘Ce petit bamboche,’ he wrote, ‘à cheveux éparpillés, ce bâtard de mandrin que les rhéteurs des Conseils appellent jeune héros et vainqueur d'Italie, expiera promptement sa gloire de tréteau, son inconduite, ses vols, ses fusillades, ses insolentes pasquinades.’

Next year he is the “instrument of the Directory and the Jacobins to intimidate the country”; and many observations of this kind might be quoted to show that Mallet at this time little anticipated the rôle which the young republican general was to play, though he described him in September 1796 as ‘*le mortel le plus téméraire, le plus actif qu'il y ait; il a une tête de salpêtre et des jambes de cerf*’.

The toleration which springs from a cynical disposition, or from a knowledge of the baseness and shallowness of human nature, is perhaps necessary to enable a man to estimate fairly the qualities which so often lead to the highest success in life. Mallet du Pan, more moralist than man of the world, more

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence for Vienna*, letter of 6th Oct. 1797.

politician than philosopher, could not readily yield his admiration to genius divorced from principle; or to the personification of that militant Jacobinism which he had made it his mission to oppose. As a writer he was perhaps less successful in seizing the character of individual men than in depicting and analysing the motives of parties and factions. The Revolution, indeed, had so far failed to bring to the front one commanding spirit, and the evident mediocrity of all the actors he was called upon to criticise confirmed him in the conviction that the course of history was little influenced by the characters of individuals. '*Il n'y a plus d'hommes, il n'y a que des évènements.*' It was impossible, indeed, to attribute the course of events to any profoundly combined plan of any individual or party. "Their very crimes were impromptu." They were all alike the victims of a movement which they could not stop, whose incendiary force they were obliged to use. "It is not Bonaparte, nor Sieyès, nor Merlin who reigns, it is the irresistible movement which the Revolution impresses upon men and affairs." It must be remembered also that Bonaparte had so far given no indication of the desire to restore order to France which Mallet was later to recognise and to applaud; and that the qualities of statesmanship which he had extolled in Frederick the Great<sup>1</sup> had not yet appeared in the character of the successful soldier of fortune. What impressed him most was the undoubted combination in Bonaparte's character of ambition

<sup>1</sup> In 1793 Mallet du Pan had selected Frederick the Great, Pombal and Franklin as the three statesmen of the eighteenth century who had been able to foresee, to prepare and to guide events (*Considérations*, Preface, iv.).



and of charlatanism; and his writings abound at this time in passages contrasting the fine sentiments and sophistries of the '*Général Rhéteur*' with his total disregard of truth and principle. Napoleon's career must be judged as a whole with its failure as well as its success; but even if Mallet over-emphasised the flaws in the character of a great popular hero, a contemporary may well be pardoned for not seeing in the early life of such men all the signs of future eminence which posterity delights to dwell upon. It is to be remembered that of the foremost writers of the Revolution Mallet du Pan and Rivarol alone shared the disadvantage of having given their ideas to the world in works which, once printed, it was impossible for them to recall or retouch; they alone wrote of the future without the assistance which actual experience of it gave to so many of the authors of the most famous memoirs and "recollections" of the time. Even in such works we may look in vain for signs of earlier appreciation; and among a people busy enough with the immediate future but caring or thinking of nothing beyond it, it may be doubted whether there were many who took a juster view of the fortune in store for Bonaparte. Barras, who first employed him, had certainly no idea of abdicating in his favour. The Directory indeed feared him, but only as they feared all their armies and generals, as they feared Hoche and Pichegru. Mallet du Pan saw at any rate that the Directorial *coup de main* of Fructidor 1797 had destroyed the illusion of republican constitutionalism, and paved the way for the rule of a single man; that the "first general, the first accredited chieftain who could raise the standard of revolt, might carry half

the country with him". Bonaparte was not yet strong enough, or too astute, to come forward, and Mallet might be excused in thinking that unless some new theatre of war presented itself, his chances were gone, at a time when none but his own *entourage* of military adventurers believed in his destiny and when he himself, fearing his *grande nation* much more than the princes and generals of Europe, was obliged to undertake the Egyptian expedition because his position was untenable at home.

Whatever may be thought of Mallet du Pan's opinions on this subject, he would undoubtedly have been prudent to keep them to himself. But want of courage was never among his failings, and he chose the moment when the struggle between the two parties in the Government was at its height for a public attack on the Directory and their victorious general in the shape of three letters in the *Quotidienne*, addressed to Dumolard a member of the Five Hundred, on the *affreuses histoires* of Venice and Genoa. These letters were intended to strengthen the hands of the moderates who made them the basis of discussion in the Council, and to arouse public opinion, lulled by the vision of the approaching peace, to a sense of the unalterably menacing character of the foreign policy of the existing French Government. Mallet's trumpet-call made a considerable sensation in Paris, but as things turned out its principal result was to stimulate the efforts of the army in support of the Directory, and to bring down upon his own head the persecution which was to drive him from his native country.<sup>1</sup> It so incensed

<sup>1</sup> The editor of the *Quotidienne*, M. Michaud, had signed Mallet's name to the letters without asking his permission.

Bonaparte that he sent for Haller, a Bernese who was his commissary and *Proveditore*, and told him that unless Mallet du Pan was immediately expelled from Berne his countrymen would sooner or later rue the protection they gave him. The sequel may be told in the younger Mallet's words:—

“By the treaties between Berne and Geneva, my father was a *combourgeois* of Berne, and had a right of residence and protection in the canton; but in such times as those to which I am alluding, those claims were not likely to be regarded. The question whether my father should be desired to quit Berne was twice brought forward in the Secret Council, and twice decided in the negative; but was ultimately carried on a third motion to that effect made towards the end of June 1797. My father had then resided upwards of four years at Berne, where he was much respected, and when this decision became public it was universally censured.

“The notification of it to my father had been accompanied by many expressions of esteem and regret, and an assurance that he might stay as long as he should find it convenient with a view to his future arrangements: and when the measure had been stigmatised by public opinion, my father was further informed that the decision of the council would not be followed up if he chose to remain. There was, however, no longer any safety for him at Berne, and he was the last man in the world to solicit any such favour.

“Among other letters addressed to him on this occasion<sup>1</sup> I have one from the Avoyer de Steiguer,

<sup>1</sup> His friend Baron d'Erlach was the first to announce the decision of the Secret Council: “Je suis, mon cher Mallet, au désespoir de ce que je suis chargé de vous annoncer. Dans mon indignation je m'abstiens de toute réflexion”. Later, on the 27th of July, he wrote describing Bonaparte's reception of Wurstenberguer, one of the



expressing in terms of great mortification and regret how deeply he felt this act of weakness and injustice. Another Bernois, M. de Bonstetten, of a great patrician family and whom I have already mentioned as distinguished for his literary acquirements, the moderation of his character, and the charm of his society, hearing after my father's departure that my mother was obliged to change houses for the short time we remained at Berne, pressed her to accept his country residence. 'I should consider myself,' says he, 'the happiest of my countrymen if I could soften in your minds the impression of our criminal weakness towards M. Mallet.' He hoped my father would forget the treatment he had received, and added, 'I wish I could hope *myself* to forget it'.

"This was the first of a series of improper concessions made to the French Government. From that time they followed apace; for a principle had been admitted, not unusual in small and weak States, but nevertheless as yet unknown to the proud government of Berne, of giving way to intimidation. No one understood better than the revolutionary rulers of France how to avail themselves of the power of this screw, which they never ceased working until they had accomplished the ruin of the Swiss Confederacy."<sup>1</sup>

The disaster of Fructidor had been a rude awakening to the Princesse d'Hénin's *coterie* in London many of whom were now at an end of their resources, and Malouet wrote asking for his friend's influence at the court of Vienna to procure for him the post of Naval

Bernese instigators of Mallet's expulsion: "Il en a été fort bien reçu, et Bonaparte lui ayant demandé s'il y avait des émigrés à Lugano, lui a tout de suite et sans attendre sa réponse fait de grands remerciements de votre renvoi et de grandes plaintes contre vous. *Ainsi voilà Bonaparte votre ennemi personnel*" (Sayous, ii., 308, 311).

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*

Intendant in the Adriatic. But Mallet du Pan's own situation was now such as to occupy all his thoughts. For more than a year he had foreseen that he would not long remain unmolested in Switzerland, and had cast about for a place of refuge elsewhere. But, as he said, it would be a favour to obtain from the Empress a hut in Siberia, and he had preferred to take his chance, with the remark '*Qui diable peut être attaché à la vie? Ce n'est pas moi, je vous en réponds!*' The time had now come when a decision must be taken. The Peace of Campo Formio (October 1797) had left Italy and the neutral States at the mercy of Bonaparte, one of whose first measures had been the annexation of the Valteline and other confederate Italian States to the Cisalpine Republic. It was therefore clear that the only safe course was to quit Switzerland. The Duke of Brunswick, on hearing how he was situated, pressed him to come to Wolfenbüttel and join his friend Mounier; and Müller, the Swiss historian and Austrian Aulic councillor, entreated him not to settle his future residence until he had written to Vienna and suggested to his Court the propriety of making Mallet du Pan such an offer as might induce him to repair to the Austrian capital. Meanwhile, leaving his son who had now rejoined him in charge of his official correspondence, Mallet du Pan set out in September in search of a retreat. He described his tedious and unsuccessful wanderings to his friend Sainte-Aldegonde (13th November): "Obliged to quit Berne, a wanderer through Switzerland, freezing with terror all these cowardly Swiss people wherever I presented myself, unable to take a decision while the issue of peace or war remained unsettled, wasting my time and

money in travelling backwards and forwards, away from my family, heartbroken by the late events in France, I have had plenty of time to school myself into stoicism. It is at least an advantage to have become convinced that I must cease to ruin myself by defending people *qui vous égorgent en s'égorgeant*. . . . I am irrevocably determined to settle in England in the spring."

"At Zürich," writes the younger Mallet, "where he had been so well received in July, the tables were already turned. The Grand Council became uneasy on his remaining there a week or ten days ; and it was settled, with a view of concealing the circumstance from the knowledge of the French minister, that his name should be omitted in the daily returns made from the inn at which he was staying. Whilst he was at Zürich several proscribed members of the Council of Ancients, who had escaped from France, came to Zürich under feigned names. Amongst them was the celebrated Portalis and his son, who made themselves known to my father, and from whom he learnt many particulars of the disastrous termination of their hopes. From Zürich my father went to Constance, but finding it full of French emigrants he determined at once on wintering at Friburg in the Brisgau ; and wrote to Count de Thugut, requesting the Emperor's permission to reside in his dominions.<sup>1</sup> To this letter, although my father had

<sup>1</sup> "A draft of this letter is among my father's miscellaneous papers ; it closes with the following paragraph : 'Votre Excellence pardonnera mon insistance à la rigueur de ma situation. J'ose attendre d'Elle et du Gouvernement de S.M.I. et R., cette compassion qu'on accorde à des innocens dans le malheur, et que je réclame à des titres, qui, quelque soit le degré de misère qui nous est encore destiné, feront passer mon nom sans tache à mes descendans.'"

"There is a stamp of elevation of mind in all my father's letters, and a respect for himself which he never allows his correspondents, whatever may be their rank, to forget" (J. L. Mallet). Thugut, it should be added, always detested Mallet du Pan.



been in communication with the court for upwards of three years, no answer was ever returned. But the Baron de Sumarau, Governor of the Brisgau, a spirited old man, took upon himself to accede to my father's wishes, and granted him the desired permission in the most handsome and flattering terms. We accordingly bade adieu to Switzerland to seek somewhere in the wide world that protection and security which our own native land no longer afforded. To Friburg, however, we proceeded in the first instance ; a pretty town with a handsome church, situated between the Rhine and the Black Forest, but too far from either to derive much beauty or advantage from those fine natural circumstances. It had been occupied several times by the French armies in the course of the war, and the house we took for the winter exhibited many signs of having been the abode of military guests. War and its attendant habits are destructive of order and decency and the whole train of Dutch virtues. A few days' occupation of a country, or even a march through it, often destroys the civilising effects of many years ; and yet, such is the animating effect of warlike circumstances upon the mind, that whenever Austrian regiments passed through the town, which they frequently did, with their martial air, magnificent bands of music and all the apparatus of real war, it required some effort to withdraw the senses and imagination from the scene, and to restrain the rising passions." <sup>1</sup>

At Friburg the family found themselves in a kind of desert, without resources or advantages save that of a position between the centre of events in France and Switzerland, an important matter for Mallet du Pan who still continued his work of correspondence. Their winter, however, was not to be without the satisfaction which some congenial society afforded, for hardly had

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*

they settled in their new home when several *émigrés* and victims of the recent *coup d'État* applied to Mallet du Pan to obtain permission from Baron de Sumarau to reside in the town for the winter. Among others, the Abbés de Lisle and Georgel were allowed to come to Friburg, but Portalis and his son with their friend Gau, one of the members of the Five Hundred, were relegated to an obscure neighbouring village in the Black Forest, and even this was considered a great favour to *émigrés* of so recent a date.

“The Abbé de Lisle was our daily guest, and his natural vivacity and agreeable conversation made us forget everything else for the time. He was an *abbé de salon* who had lived in the best society of Paris, and possessed an inexhaustible fund of anecdote, which he told in a graceful and lively manner. He was likewise always ready to recite passages from his works, a task which he performed with great spirit and feeling. But notwithstanding his genius and social accomplishments, the Abbé de Lisle was the merest child that ever lived; amused with any bauble; on some subjects quite inaccessible to reason; a creature of caprice and passion. On hearing him describe the green and white pasteboard cabriolet with which he dashed along the Boulevards at Paris, one might have taken him for an Eton boy let loose from school; and when he raved about the Revolution, for an *échappé* from Bicêtre. All that he saw in that great event was the loss of his abbey: men, measures, opinions, times, were all confounded in his mind in one indistinguishable mass, through which he could discern nothing but his lost abbey.

“The Abbé Georgel was a clever man of the world who had seen human affairs through a far different medium. Courts, and diplomacy and intrigue had been his sphere of observation. He had been secre-

tary to the Cardinal de Rohan, and an active agent in the disgraceful affair of the Queen's diamond necklace, which was considered by Bonaparte as one of the immediate causes of the Revolution."<sup>1</sup>

But the great resource of both Mallet du Pan and his son was their intercourse with the two Portalis. With the younger Portalis<sup>2</sup> the latter struck up a friendship which lasted for fifty years, and he records with delight his recollection of their long walks in the green valleys of the Black Forest along the hill streams which flow towards the Rhine, philosophising all the way with the eagerness and freshness of youth.

"Portalis and his son," he writes, "occasionally came from their retreat to spend a couple of days with us. They were natives of Provence, and their accent as well as the vivacity of their manner left no doubt of their southern origin. The father had been Attorney-General to his province previously to the Revolution; and considerations of personal safety had led him to Paris at a later period. His influence in the Council of Ancients had drawn upon him the enmity of the Directory, notwithstanding the moderation of his principles and his freedom from party spirit. On his return to France in 1799 he was immediately made a councillor of state, and was the principal person concerned in the formation of the Civil Code, the most lasting monument of Bonaparte's reign. Portalis was a man of great eloquence, great address, enlarged views of philosophy and legislation; but who was

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*

<sup>2</sup> Subsequently Minister of Public Worship under Napoleon, and under the Bourbons Deputy Keeper of the Seals, Minister of Justice in Villèle's Ministry, and afterwards at the head of the French Magistracy as First President of the Cour de Cassation. He was a man of great simplicity and the highest moral worth.



deficient in political courage. His attachment to free institutions, which was sincere, gave way at the latter period of his life to the less liberal maxims of Napoleon's government. He and his son were both religious, and strongly deprecated the demoralising effects of the French school of philosophy. Portalis had a striking person and manner; grave, impassioned, eloquent in discussion, and yet playful, familiar and almost homely in the common intercourse of life. His voice was deep, pleasing, and persuasive; his eyesight so defective that he looked as if he had been blind, and when pensive he reminded me of those ancient busts in which the pupil of the eye is not marked."<sup>1</sup>

In the family circle the Revolution was naturally the great theme, and old Portalis, who had lived through that memorable epoch and personally known many of the *dramatis personæ*, would often expatiate on the scenes he had witnessed with great force of observation and power of language.

"Both he and his son had been confined for fourteen months in the *Maison de Santé* of Bel-Homme in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine at Paris, which had been converted into a prison. Certain facilities were given in these houses which could not be had in the common prisons, and it was a sort of favour to be admitted there. Among the persons confined at Bel-Homme were several of the principal *noblesse* of Brittany—M. de Boisgelin, former President of the States of that Province; M. de Noyant, likewise a considerable man at Rennes; and also M. de Nicolai, President of the *Chambre des Comptes* in the Parliament of Paris. The utmost punctilio was observed among these personages; regular introductions were necessary to

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*

be admitted into the different circles. The *Noblesse* kept aloof and did not mix with the *Roturiers*. M. de Nicolai, who was executed after a few months' detention, had brought from his house a part of his library, some furniture, and 2,000 bottles of wine. Other wealthy individuals had followed his example. After breakfasting in their respective apartments every one dressed about eleven o'clock, and walked in the garden when the weather permitted. Two o'clock was the dinner hour; a *traiteur* had the custom of the house. At four o'clock the messenger of death entered and summoned his victims; a general gloom and apprehension preceded this appalling moment, but as soon as the unfortunate individual whose last hour had struck had taken leave of his friends, all was life again at the Bel-Homme. At five o'clock, a second and more careful toilet took place; the different circles met, and the evening was spent very much as if the same persons had assembled at their respective *Hôtels*, in drinking tea, playing cards, *trictrac*, and conversation. The precarious tenure under which these inmates of the Half-way House to the Guillotine held their lives and property did not in any manner soften their old political animosities, and on one occasion when a former Intendant of Brittany who had quarrelled with the Provincial States was brought in, and a question arose whether he should be admitted into M. de Boisgelin's circle, a meeting of several members of the States was held in the apartment of the old President de Noyant, at which it was resolved that they would not give their vote to M. de Boisgelin at the next election of First President, in case he visited the Intendant; which threat had the desired effect."<sup>1</sup>

The factious advocate, Linguet, who had been the object of Mallet du Pan's youthful enthusiasm, was also at Bel-Homme.

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*

"The Parliament people all shunned him, and he lived in a sort of solitude amidst the dissipations of the place. On his summons being brought him he came to the apartment of Portalis with the warrant in his hand to ask him whether he was required to appear under an act of accusation, or only as a witness. Portalis, who knew the form of these instruments, told him that his own trial was coming on. He received the intelligence with calm, went and dressed himself, took some refreshment with his wife, and left the prison, never to return. These scenes were of daily occurrence, save on the *Decadi*, when the Revolutionary Tribunal did not sit and the guillotine suspended its toils. The interval between the day preceding the *Decadi* and the following morning was therefore a respite, and the schoolboys enjoyed their holiday as if the hand of the executioner was for ever stayed. Such modes of behaviour are contrary to all the higher notions of propriety, and yet they were not inconsistent with the most heroic feelings. These very people left their frivolities for the scaffold with such stoical unconcern that the Committee of Public Safety became apprehensive of the effect which such unheard of fortitude might have on the spectators and the people. In some prisons therefore the persons whose fate was decided were kept on bread and water for several days before their execution, and a proposal was actually made in the Committee of Public Safety to bleed their victims previously to their appearing in public."<sup>1</sup>

Ancient history however did not, we may be sure, engross the thoughts of the party, occupied as they were with the pressing anxieties of the moment. The Directory had resorted to the harshest and most oppressive methods at home and abroad, and had resolved

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*



on the conquest and "regeneration" of Switzerland, which they were proceeding to carry out with their usual combination of intrigue and violence. Their next step after the banishment of Mallet du Pan was a note from the French Minister demanding the dismissal of Wickham, the British Minister, and after this requisition succeeded requisition, and concession followed concession.

"Bonaparte, who passed rapidly through the country on his way to the Congress of Rastadt, let out here and there, in his usual emphatic manner, expressions calculated to shake and disorganise the tottering fabric; and in the month of December all further pretences were laid aside, the French troops took possession of the Bishopric of Basle, and the Directory, by a decree of the 28th of that month, made the Government of Berne responsible for the personal safety and property of its revolted subjects. The scenes that followed are now matters of history. The healing hand of time and of good government has (1830) removed all actual traces of these lamentable events, when a prosperous and happy people were overrun by a rude soldiery who had themselves but a few years before learnt the art of war in defence of their country and freedom. It was not Principalities that they came to destroy, but the mountain *Chalet*, and the peaceful shepherd and his flocks. I am aware of the pretexts for this unprovoked and unjustifiable aggression. There were the wrongs of the Pays de Vaud, if wrongs they can be called; there was the aristocracy of Berne and its treasures; and the chance that more popular forms of Government might be established in some Cantons. Nor do I mean to contend that improvements have not followed, and Switzerland is not again happy and independent, and probably more united than before; but these blessings are in the main

due to the destruction of the Imperial Government and of that Iron Hand, guided by unrivalled genius, that would not have left a vestige of freedom in Europe, had it been as cautious as it was powerful. Every day's post brought us some distressing intelligence, some deep and heart-rending tale of woe and destruction. All that we held dear was involved in the greatest of political calamities—foreign invasion embittered by civil war. Madame de Bonstetten, who was at Interlachen to the last, wrote to me regularly. She was surrounded by manifestations of loyalty and public spirit, the Oberland being all in arms; but her eye was fixed on the Councils of the Republic where she saw nothing but irresolute and wavering opinions. As the French advanced a number of Swiss families fled to Friburg, where they all came to lament with my father the calamities of which their treatment of him had been the first signal.”<sup>1</sup>

The agitation and grief with which Mallet du Pan watched the collapse of the Swiss resistance may be imagined. “They might have changed the face of Europe, they have preferred to dishonour themselves by the most stupid and unworthy servility.” The warlike spirit of the people who only asked to be led against the enemy was rendered useless by the timid and temporising policy of the Governments, and on the 1st of February 1798 he writes to Sainte-Aldegonde: “Switzerland is finished; we shall soon be able to say the same of Europe. . . . Berne has bitterly repented of its treatment of me. A month ago I was entreated to return and take up my work there.” The battle of Fraubrünnen on the 5th of March vindicated the patriotic courage of the nation but extinguished all further

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*

hopes of resistance in Switzerland, and shortly afterwards the ancient Republic of Geneva met the fate which Mallet du Pan had long foreseen, and which its credulous citizens fancied they had averted by their adoption of the revolution and their cringing submission to their mighty neighbour. On the 16th of April, in spite of repeated assurances from the French Government and from Bonaparte himself that the independence of Geneva would be respected, the city was entered by 1,800 French soldiers and annexed to the French Republic; and by the first article of the Treaty of Union, Mallet du Pan with two other Genevese was expressly deprived of the honour of being at any time admitted to French citizenship.

Mallet du Pan had not waited for this event to determine upon his future abode. The cessation of his communications with France deprived him of the means of continuing his Vienna correspondence, a work which had for some time been distasteful to him as a mere "ploughing of the sands," and the failure of this resource now made it as necessary as it was congenial to him to write for the public, and to carry on his struggle against the Directory openly as a journalist. '*J'aime mieux à faire au public,*' he had written to his son a few months earlier, '*qu'à tous les rois de la terre.*' He had clung to the hope of returning to Paris till the triumph of the Directory in Fructidor convinced him that a military despotism was to be the fate of France. He had long contemplated offers of a settlement which had come to him from friendly German Princes, but the condition of the Continent now seemed to him to promise little more security than that of France for the liberty, for which he was pining,



to express and publish his opinions. "I have only been tolerated here," he wrote to De Pradt from Friburg, "under the promise of keeping silence." "Only England remains where a man may write, speak, think and act. There is my place; there is no other for anyone who wishes to carry on the war." His son thus describes reasons which finally decided him on this new venture :—

"My father's health was impaired, and he had been subject throughout the winter to a very painful cough. He had also deeply felt the treatment he had met with at Berne, and the public calamities that followed. Whatever scheme we might form was subject to serious contingencies, and the retiring to England, which in some respects seemed the least unpromising, would be attended with heavy expense. This project had been first suggested to us by a Scotch gentleman at Berne, Mr. Mackintosh, a sensible, well-informed man, who recommended my father to consult his friends in this country as to the probable success of a French periodical work to be published in London in the manner of the *Mercure de France*. Mr. Wickham was favourable to the scheme, and had kindly assured us that he would forward it by every means in his power. I wrote likewise to our excellent friend, Mr. John Reeves, to consult him on the subject. Reeves sent my letter to the old Lord Liverpool with whom he had official connections, and also to Mr. Windham, then Secretary at War, both of whom desired him to encourage my father in his views. Reeves was an active, friendly man, who took up the thing warmly, and offered to receive us in his own house in Cecil Street, until we could make suitable arrangements. It was no doubt a satisfaction to him from a political point of view to enlist my father's talents in the *good cause* on this side of the Channel; but far from dissembling the difficulties

of the undertaking, he warned my father that he was not to look in England for that sort of active countenance from the Government, which Continental States sometimes afford to public writers ; but that the success of the scheme would in the main depend on individual exertions. Thus encouraged by our friends we determined on setting out for England in the spring.<sup>1</sup> On this resolution becoming known to our emigrant friends, my father received all sorts of proposals for co-operating in his undertaking, but he wisely declined them all. Sainte-Aldegonde," he adds, "likewise sent to my father a long extract from a letter of Monsieur (afterwards Charles X.), which did not reach him till after our arrival in London ; full of flattering expressions, and intimating his wish that my father would join at Hamburg the Prince's confidential friend, the Comte d'Escars, for whom a King's vessel had been sent to conduct him to Edinburgh, Monsieur being desirous of consulting my father on various subjects. '*Les preuves d'attachement,*' says the Prince, '*qu'il m'a données en plusieurs occasions, me portent à penser qu'il éprouverait du plaisir à recevoir de nouvelles marques de mon estime et de ma confiance.*' This was all very flattering, but it would not have been advisable, in the state of my father's health, to have exposed him to the fatigue of such a voyage ; and, all circumstances considered, it was fortunate that the letter did not reach us till it was too late to comply with the Prince's desire."<sup>2</sup>

In the early days of April, therefore, he set out from Friburg with all his family except his second son, who remained at Geneva with his uncle, and his eldest daughter who had remained in Paris.

<sup>1</sup> "Il n'y a plus à reculer, il faut se créer quelques ressources et se fixer quelque part. Le continent ne m'offre que des persécutions, des dégoûts, l'impossibilité d'écrire nulle part, et la certitude de mourir de faim." (To Sainte-Aldegonde, 14th December 1797.)

<sup>2</sup> *Reminiscences.*

"We purchased a carriage for the journey, which was," writes the younger Mallet, "long and tedious, for travelling in Germany is (or was, at least in my time) attended with more inconvenience than in any other country I am acquainted with. Bad inns, bad beds and bad cookery; bad roads in almost all the inferior States; slow and phlegmatic postmasters, and worse postillions. These things may be altered since Napoleon quickened their paces and stimulated their sleepy faculties; but they were very bad in 1798. We saw many agreeable, well-built towns; many good-looking heroes, doing duty at threepence a day; and some fine country—Heidelberg and the Bergstrasse particularly."

In this fashion they arrived at Brunswick, where the Duke received them with every kindness and facilitated their progress to Cuxhaven, tracing out the route they were to follow with his own hand. There they embarked, and after a stormy passage of eighty-two hours, diversified by an alarm of pursuit by a French privateer, they landed at Yarmouth on the 1st of May 1798 and soon made their way to Mr. Reeves' hospitable house in Cecil Street in the Strand.



## CHAPTER IX.

SETTLEMENT IN LONDON — *MERCURE*  
*BRITANNIQUE*—DEATH.

1798-1800.

It is significant of the part played by England in the war since the opening days of the Revolution that it should have attracted but little of the attention of a writer who had always shown a remarkable degree of sympathy with her institutions and knowledge of her history. At first, indeed, the opinions which he, and his friends among the constitutional Royalists who had found a refuge at London represented, caused his advice to be eagerly sought, and he had, as we have seen, been invited to draw up memorials for the British Cabinet, while he had formed relations of a very cordial character with the British representatives at Brussels, Turin and Berne. But he does not seem to have long entertained from the policy of Great Britain any hope of results in the sense of his recommendations in favour of vigorous action in the field, combined with diplomacy which should explain her objects to the French people. Pitt's "dogged determination to ignore the French Revolution," as Lord Rosebery says, had yielded with the progress of the war to a "singular but luckless energy," and a series of unfortunate and ill-planned expeditions had left the British armies without a foothold in Europe, while naval victories and colonial conquests

gave colour to the universal opinion as to the selfishness of British policy.<sup>1</sup> Pitt's conduct of the war, nevertheless, was honesty itself compared with that of the Governments whom he subsidised. But Mallet du Pan early formed an unfavourable opinion of the utility of the English alliance. England's extreme unpopularity in France made her, in his opinion, the worst possible instrument of the policy he advocated of fostering the counter-revolutionary elements in the country, and the brutal conduct of the British troops under the Duke of York had drawn from him a remark, which the presence of the Cossacks in Italy confirmed, that any army which revolted the population would only serve the Revolution. For the same reason he had blamed the Comte d'Artois for following the British flag, and stated his belief that the reputed connection of the Vendéans with England would complete the unpopularity of their cause. In August 1795 he wrote to Sainte-Aldegonde, who had urged him to endeavour to diminish the hatred of the French towards England, that it was not for a private individual to destroy a prejudice six centuries old, a prejudice which had grown into fanaticism and had been justified by the conduct of the British Government. It was, he declared, for that Government alone to remove this deep and fatal impression, not by in-

<sup>1</sup> "But in this most arduous and most momentous conflict, which, from its nature, should have aroused us to new and unexampled efforts, I know not how it has been that we have never put forth half the strength which we have exerted in ordinary wars. . . . We drew back the arm of our military force which had never been more than half raised to oppose. . . . From that time we have been combating only with the other arm of our naval power, . . . which struck, almost unresisted, with blows which could never reach the heart of the mischief" (Burke's *Regicide Peace*).

significant pronouncements but by positive action, by recognising the King, by promising the restitution of conquests, by a formal engagement not to meddle with the integrity and independence of France.

If Mallet du Pan was dissatisfied with the management of the warlike operations of the British Government, he was equally disgusted by Pitt's repeated attempts to make peace. He covers Lord Malmesbury's mission<sup>1</sup> to Lille, in July 1797, with ridicule, and its undignified termination justified his strictures. "I am convinced," he wrote to De Castries, "of the truth of what Mr. Burke has written on this subject—the revolution must end or it will devour Europe. To seek safety in negotiation, *c'est comprimer l'Etna avec des feuilles de papier*." But the day was at hand when the extremity of the danger produced by four years of military incapacity and ministerial optimism and blindness, combined, it must in justice be added, with the well-deserved collapse of continental resistance to the Revolution, was to rouse the British people from their apathy and to call forth the high spirit and dauntless energy of their great statesman.

The naval victories of St. Vincent and Camperdown alone prevented the year 1797 from being one of the darkest in English history, and the younger Mallet, at that time in England, noted the circumstances which seemed to portend the early withdrawal of England from the contest:—

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Canning, then Under-Secretary of State, writing to Lord Malmesbury at Lille in July 1797, says: "We are soulless and spiritless. When Windham says 'We must not have peace,' I ask him, 'Can we have war? It is out of the question. We have not of all means that which is the most essential—the mind'" (*Malmesbury Memoirs*, vol. iii.).



"I cannot," he wrote, "altogether pass over the extraordinary and alarming circumstances which agitated this country in the spring of 1797—the mutiny at the Nore, the Irish Rebellion, and the stoppage of the cash payments of the Bank of England. No crisis that I remember can be compared to this, and at no period have I witnessed so much alarm among all classes of people. The measures adopted by the Government seemed nearly as desperate, and as likely to prove fatal in their consequences, as the dangers they were intended to avert; but nothing can be more unsafe than anticipations in politics, and on this, as on many other occasions, the wisest in their generation are not always true prophets."

The failure of the negotiations, however, and the menacing attitude of the Directory after Fructidor were soon to alter the tone of public opinion, and to show that Mallet du Pan had been better informed than his angry critics when he warned the British government<sup>1</sup> that they were for the first time about to become the object of serious attack. Isolated in Europe, for the peace of Campo Formio had deprived her of the last of her allies, England, the envied power which had really grown stronger by the exhaustion of every continental state, and whose free constitution was an irritating refutation of the democratic pretensions of revolutionary France, was now to be struck at through her credit and her commerce; and Mallet, in indicating the nature of the war to be waged upon her, sketched out the plan which was to develop under Napoleon into the famous but futile Continental System.

By the time Mallet du Pan arrived in England, a complete transformation in the attitude both of the

<sup>1</sup> *Lettre à un Ministre d'Etat*, London, 1797.

Government and the people had been effected by the threatening action of the Directory. It was therefore at a singularly appropriate moment that the untiring opponent of revolutionary despotism sought a home in the country which had just been forced into the position of the champion of the principle of national independence. The enthusiasm called forth by Bonaparte's threatened invasion, and the assembling of the so-called Army of England on the opposite coast, had doubtless prepared Mallet du Pan for the spectacle of public spirit and national feeling for which he had so often appealed in vain on the Continent; and he had already remarked upon the fact that a direct opposition of principles and conduct was to be found only between the free countries of England and America and the pretended apostles of liberty. But the reality far surpassed his expectations. The impression it made on him is described, as his son remarks, "in his own happy and forcible manner," in a letter which he wrote to Gallatin at Berlin in May 1798:—

"I could fancy myself in another world, in another century. The contrast between the Continent and England is astounding. '*Et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos*' is indeed true of to-day. Across the sea I left Europe in the throes of a convulsive effort to secure at any cost a shameful peace. I left it in doubt and indecision, distracted by divisions and alarms, incapable either of defence or of union, destitute of all patriotism, unable to devise any common means of safety. Here, we are in the full tide of war, crushed by taxation and exposed to the fury of the most desperate of enemies, but nevertheless security, abundance and energy reign supreme, alike in cottage and palace. I have not met with a single instance of nervousness or apprehension. The

spectacle presented by public opinion has far surpassed my expectation. The nation had not yet learnt to know its own strength or its resources; the government has taught it the secret, and inspired it with an unbounded confidence almost amounting to presumption. There is a good deal of intolerance, confined however to the sanest part of the population. They detest France, the Revolution, the Jacobins, the Directory, precisely as France hated the aristocrats in 1789." After dwelling on the "admirable" measures taken by the Ministry for its defence of the country, he continues: "You may imagine that I am in my element, with no need of periphrasis to express my opinions and no fear of exile if I am wanting in respect to Barras or Merlin de Douai!"

It was a simple and definite issue which had at last aroused popular sentiment. But the writer already observed the absence of any real perception of what the Revolution meant for Europe. With all this "superb display" he saw how little the question at issue was generally understood. Sixty years before Voltaire had remarked that in no country were the sources of information so rare as in England, that in none was there greater indifference to matters of external interest; and Mallet soon asked himself how all this enthusiasm and energy, how the calmness and order of the country, how the discipline and spirit of the British troops and the supremacy of the British fleets, would prevent France from devouring Europe bit by bit and carrying on her work of universal dissolution. "While commerce is prosperous too little attention is paid to the Continent, and there are national prejudices on the subject which I must make it my business to remove." To make better known in England the real situation abroad was a task for which



Mallet was specially qualified. "I am treated with some confidence," he wrote to his friend, "*fournissez-moi des armes !*"

No longer however with the old confidence and hopefulness but as a persecuted and embittered opponent of the triumphant Revolution did Mallet du Pan prepare to renew the struggle. It was with the words, "It is idle to fight a revolution with sheets of paper," that he had abandoned the editorship of the *Mercure de France*. His experiences as adviser of the French Princes and foreign Governments had been no less discouraging. Early in 1797 he had told his son that he was profoundly disgusted with his labours in this direction, his counsels and reflections having been continually set aside. It was therefore primarily the necessity imposed on an exile who had lost income, savings, library and all his worldly possessions of assuring for himself and his family a means of livelihood, that decided him to enter upon the editorship of a new journal; and with growing distaste at the exigencies of his "detestable scribbling,"—*il est impossible d'en être plus las, plus dégoûté, plus accablé*,—he carried on the work till it brought him to the grave. Not that he would ever have willingly acquiesced in withdrawal from the contest in which he had been so deeply engaged. The need of speaking what was in his mind was strong to the end, and soon after his arrival in England he expressed in touching and eloquent words his gratitude to the country which gave him the power to do so:—

'J'ai perdu, avec la Suisse, patrie, parents, amis : il ne m'en reste que des souvenirs déchirants. Je serais peut-être sans asyle, si le ciel ne m'eût réservé

un port où je puis accuser, sans les craindre, des tyrans en démence, dont l'orgueilleuse impuissance menace vainement ce dernier boulevard de la vieille Europe. C'est sous la protection d'une nation inébranlable que je dépose ici et mes récits et mes douleurs. Sans sa magnanimité j'éprouverais encore le tourment du silence. Jamais trop de reconnaissance ne payera le bienfait de cet affranchissement.<sup>1</sup>

John Reeves, who received the whole family in his house in Cecil Street overlooking the river, was an odd, good-natured, clever man, extremely hospitable and friendly, and although very decided in his views free from all personal bitterness. He had begun life on a lawyer's pittance and ended it with £200,000, amassed during a thirty-five years' tenure of lucrative offices; among them the post of Superintendent of the Alien Office, King's Patentee for the printing of Bibles and Prayer Books, and Chief Justice of Newfoundland resident in London, an appointment which gave rise to the comment that "either justice was not necessary to Newfoundland, or that John Reeves was not necessary to justice". He probably owed his success in life to his political connection with Sir John Scott, afterwards Lord Eldon, during the proceedings at the Crown and Anchor tavern in the early part of the French Revolution, and his house was frequented by many of his political associates who greeted Mallet du Pan with great cordiality: men like "Mr. John Fowler and Mr. John Gifford, both bitter party men, but from whom we received the very kindest attention not only during my father's life but also after his death".

<sup>1</sup> The concluding words of the preface to his essay on the destruction of Swiss liberty (*Mercure Britannique*, 20th Aug. 1798).

"Our old friends," continues Mallet's son,<sup>1</sup> "the Wickhams, Rigauds, Saladins, Achards, Lord Fincastle, Sir John Macpherson, Malouet, Lally, and Montlosier likewise gave us the kindest welcome ; and a whole host of French emigrants of all shades of opinion, from the Bishop of Arras to the Chevalier de Grave (a Girondin), called on my father, all anxious to sound his intentions, to conciliate him to their own views, and to engage his talents and rising influence in support of their opinions. His former political ties and prepossessions were all on the side of his old friends the *Monarchiens* most of whom were in England ; but these friends, whose moderation and temperate views of government had led them to cultivate the society of the Whigs, did not like to see my father connect himself in England exclusively with the Anti-Jacobin party. They had likewise expected from their long intimacy with him that he would have placed himself at once in their hands, and associated some of them in his labours. My father's excited feelings on his arrival here, and his determination to take his own line, therefore produced a little coolness at first. Malouet alone, who had a true affection for him and whose heart and generous disposition were inaccessible to any secondary considerations, devoted himself to us, gave my father excellent advice, and exerted himself with his English friends of whom he had many highly respectable to ensure my father's success."

Nor was Mallet du Pan altogether neglected by members of the Government, although Reeves had warned him not to rely on their assistance in his enterprise.

"The old Lord Liverpool was one of the most considerable of those to whom Reeves introduced my father. He came to dine in Cecil Street, and I well

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*



remember his cold, diplomatic, silent manner—of all men the least calculated to inspire confidence and encourage independent talents. I must, however, do him the justice to say that he took a real interest in the success of my father's work. I have several letters of his written to Reeves previously to our coming to England, entering in detail into the means of securing its success. . . .

“Very different in most respects was Mr. Windham, then Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department, whom we met at dinner at Mr. Wickham's, and whose courteous, open, and engaging manners formed a great contrast with old Jenkinson. We were delighted with his reception, and I shall never forget his taking me by the hand and saying, ‘As to this young gentleman, he is no stranger to me; for I have seen some letters of his, written in very good English, and very creditable to his feelings’. Nothing could exceed the openness and charm of his manner.”<sup>1</sup>

To him, as well as to some other friends, Mallet du Pan submitted a sort of prospectus of his intended work, and an estimate was formed of the expenses of the undertaking from which it appeared that 500 subscribers would give him an income; but nothing like open countenance, such as the promise of occasional communications from the Foreign Office and other departments which were generally given to government papers, was forthcoming. All that the editor obtained was a subscription of twenty-five copies from the Home Office for the use of the French conquered colonies.

“There was then,” writes his son, “hardly a court in Europe, save that of London, where a public writer of such character and influence would not have met with some personal attentions from the individuals at

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*

the head of the Government. My father had been entrusted with an important mission by Louis XVI. ; he had been marked out by Bonaparte and the Directory as a man to be hunted out of the Continent ; he had lost his fortune, health, and peace of mind ; he had been banished from France for supporting an oppressed minority, with whom he had no other community of interest and feeling than a sense of public wrong ; he was a republican and a Protestant—they were the privileged members of a Catholic and absolute monarchy. He might therefore have expected, without any unreasonable pretensions, that the same men who were lavishing the treasures and the blood of this country in resisting the progress of the Revolution by every possible means, legitimate and illegitimate, would not have left him wholly unnoticed ; more particularly as there was hardly a subordinate agent employed in conducting some of the disgraceful underplots then going on that had not a personal access to the ministers. Mr. Pitt had, however, no predilection for men of letters, and was not conversant with French. But Lord Grenville and Lord Spencer, Lord Loughborough, Windham, and Canning were capable of appreciating the merits of a foreign writer. I have already mentioned Mr. Windham's courteous reception of us ; but our intercourse ended there. We afterwards met Mr. Canning at Sir W. Drummond's to whom Lord Dunmore had introduced us ; but his manner was distant and cold, and he did not utter five sentences during the whole of dinner. Gifford, the poet, who was likewise there maintained a repulsive silence ; such are the manners of this country, and the reception foreigners not unfrequently experience even in the best society. I am aware that such disappointments were not peculiar to us, and that in a greater or less degree Johnson's maxim that 'for aught he knew all foreigners were fools' generally prevails in the minds of Englishmen. I am likewise aware of the disinclination of

English people, even the best bred and best educated, to converse in French; but this *mauvaise honte* ought to give way to a feeling of courtesy and to the desire of benefiting by the conversation of men distinguished for their information or talents.”<sup>1</sup>

In spite of all difficulties, however, Mallet's reputation and the energy of his friends enabled him to start a new journal, appearing every fortnight, which was called the *Mercure Britannique*.

“All our friends exerted themselves with the greatest zeal, and subscriptions came in rapidly. The Dukes of York, Kent and Gloucester, the ministers, and many persons of rank and of Parliamentary or literary distinction, were among the number. Most of the foreign ministers in England, and many distinguished persons on the Continent likewise subscribed, so that we soon exceeded 500 copies, and in the course of a few months reached 750: a large circulation for a foreign newspaper published in England.”<sup>2</sup>

The objects which the editor set before himself in this publication were to direct the efforts of Europe against the French, to enforce the lessons of ten years of revolution, and to combat misconceptions prevalent no less on the Continent than in England as to the strength, the success and the character of the French Republic, the ability of its rulers, the irresistible march of the Revolution, and the means of hindering its approach. Such misconceptions were among the most serious obstacles to the formation of

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences*.

<sup>2</sup> *Mercure Britannique*; ou *Notices historiques et critiques sur les affaires du temps*, 4 vols., composed of thirty-six numbers, the first dated 20th August 1798, and the last 25th March 1800. It was widely circulated in Europe and several times republished after the author's death.



a new coalition such as that which was headed by Pitt at the beginning of the year 1799.

These few volumes—for the work lasted only two years—contain the maturest fruit of his genius and experience, and in turning to it, after the diplomatic correspondence in which the last few years had been passed, one cannot but feel that his own instinct was right in telling him that he was at his best as a journalist. That correspondence indeed is distinguished, as we have seen, for its just and powerful analyses of public opinion in France and of the spirit of parties, for its outspoken criticism of the conduct of the allies, and above all for an intelligible view of policy urged with spirit and consistency, and enforced by appeals to experience. But it would be in the highest degree unfair to base a judgment of the author upon this portion of his work alone. Written for a special purpose, the official correspondence deals with a restricted portion of the subject, and its faults are perhaps inseparable from such a species of composition. A certain optimism was both prudent and politic in writing to the parties upon whom success or failure depended, and some exaggeration and violence of tone, some repetition of ideas, are certain to be found in a series of secret memoranda presented to a Cabinet, and published, as historical criticism demands, in the exact form in which they were written. It is to the works in which he appealed to Europe and to posterity that we must look for broader views than are to be found in the pleadings of an advocate and diplomatist. Moderation, or what passed for it, was not to be expected from one whose convictions had been hardened in the furnace of experiences such as his, and moderation is not the word to describe the tone of the *Mercure*

*Britannique*, at all events in the articles on the treatment of the Swiss cantons. The younger Mallet, when he remarks on the "too indiscriminately violent" tone of the journal, and compares it in this respect with the writings of Burke, makes a criticism more in harmony with the spirit of the liberal reaction of his own lifetime than would perhaps be passed on it by recent students of the Revolution. But what the work loses in calm detachment of style it gains in force, in precision, in concentration, in emphasis, in irony. "Never," writes the latest and most judicious of his critics, M. Valette, "did the gifts of observation, of moral analysis, of vigorous and vehement expression shine with a brighter ray in Mallet's works than during these last years which marked the destruction of his hopes, and convinced him of the uselessness of his long career of struggle, of danger, and of unrecognised devotion." To represent Mallet du Pan's writing at this time as having lost its balance and judgment would indeed be to give a wholly false impression of the *Mercure* as a whole. His attitude towards the ultra-Royalists and his appreciation of Bonaparte's position are sufficient evidence to the contrary, and his articles on such subjects as Washington's career, on the influence of the philosophers, and on the causes of the Revolution, are conceived in a spirit very far removed from that attributed to him by some of his critics. If, for instance, we are wearied by the iteration of gloomy forebodings of the fate of Europe, of the irresistible might of the Revolutionary movement, of the impending dissolution of social order, we may turn to a passage, one among many, to words which seem rather those of an historian than of one who had suffered from the convulsion every misfortune but the guillotine :—

“The annals of the world have preserved the memory of many such climacteric eras, in which the intoxication of unreason working upon human passions has seized upon society to destroy its harmony and punish generations of its members. We hear it said that the Revolution is unparalleled in its horror. Nothing, not even the wonder of fools, is unparalleled in this world. As for horror, was it, alas! less grievous to be a loyal royalist in Paris when Charles the Bad assassinated the Marshal de Champagne in the very arms of his sovereign? Was it less grievous to be the Admiral de Coligny in 1572 than the Prince de Condé in 1793? Was it less grievous to be the descendant of Aurungzebe, or of Michael Palæologus, than of Louis XIV.? For contemporary witnesses every event is unique, yet history offers us a succession of perpetual but dissimilar horrors. It is the honourable task of the historian to discriminate between them; the learning of a pedant can discover their resemblances.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Merc. Brit.*, No. 8, 10th December 1798. The passage which follows is so characteristic of the author both in style and matter, that I may be excused for quoting it in the original:—

“Ce qui sert à faire de la Révolution de France un tableau sans exemple, ce ne sont ni ses doctrines, ni ses crimes, ni ses origines, ni ses malheurs: c’est le caractère particulier de ses auteurs et de ses victimes; c’est ce mélange de méchanceté usurpatrice et de fanatisme scolastique enté sur la vanité nationale; c’est cet enchaînement de crimes rendus nécessaires par d’autres crimes, dans ces transitions graduelles de l’esprit d’indépendance au besoin d’un despotisme régulier; c’est cette inconstance des opinions après la fièvre de l’enthousiasme; c’est cette union du génie des sectes à celui des conquérants, qui attaque à la fois les territoires et les institutions, les religions, les usages, les mœurs, les propriétés et les sentiments publics; c’est ce concours de l’hypocrisie avec la férocité, du langage des lumières avec la bassesse de l’ignorance, des sophismes avec les forfaits, et d’une corruption perfectionnée avec la brutalité des temps de barbarie: c’est, enfin, ce contraste éternel entre les principes et les actions, entre l’empire des idées et celui des intérêts, entre la force



The first three numbers of the new periodical were filled with an account of the invasion of Switzerland and the destruction of the Helvetic Confederacy, written with all the energy and eloquence of outraged patriotism. This event had excited great interest and indignation in England which was kept alive by the heroic and continued resistance of the smaller cantons.

"The title of the work," writes Mallet's son,<sup>1</sup> "*Essay on the Destruction of the Helvetic Confederacy*, does not seem the most suitable to an animated historical narrative ; but it was probably adopted with reference to the first part of it, containing an analysis of the causes which led to the subversion of the Confederacy : a masterly sketch (as I remember hearing Dumont observe) of the struggles of a Republic menaced with foreign invasion and torn by internal dissensions. The first chapter treats of the moral and civil state of the Canton of Berne previously to the Revolution, and contains an account of the manners and Government of that happy people, of which neither time nor any change of circumstances can ever lessen the interest. In reading the chapter, and more particularly that part of it which relates to the manners of the Bernois peasantry, my children will form a just notion of the talents and feeling of their grandfather, and of the people whom the

des hommes et celle des évènements : contraste qui, après avoir enfanté une suite de vicissitudes, les a perpétuées, et qu'on n'explique ni par des déclamations, ni par des fables apocalyptiques sur les causes secrètes".

Again : "Un révolte peut être l'ouvrage d'un quart d'heure ; les Révolutions sont celui des siècles. Aucune n'eut sa source dans un principe inopiné : mais en s'unissant à une ou plusieurs causes accidentelles, leurs mobiles préparatoires et antécédants les développent. La poudre à canon éclate à l'approche d'une étincelle ; ce n'est pas l'étincelle qui compose la poudre à canon."

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*

French came to *regenerate*. I would have them turn to a note at page 45, containing a striking description of a Bernois country wedding. Often have I seen my father rise from the composition of this work overcome and agitated, and walking up and down the room until he had recovered from the powerful emotions excited in his mind. He was then almost ready to say with Valentine of Milan, 'Rien ne m'est plus, plus ne m'est rien'."

The work had an immediate and gratifying success the first edition being at once exhausted. Mallet du Pan, we read, was particularly touched by the letters he received from several Bernese gentlemen; and by none more than a letter from Ch. L. Haller,<sup>1</sup> the Gallican enthusiast who in his capacity of Secretary to the Police Committee of Council at Berne in 1797 had been so active in promoting Mallet's sentence of banishment from the canton. The eyes of this infatuated young man had been opened by subsequent events, and his patriotic feelings excited in an opposite direction.

This auspicious beginning put the exiled family in good spirits, and they saw the hope of better days and of a less precarious and unsettled existence. After staying three weeks with John Reeves they had taken up their residence at 19 Woodstock Street, a small street out of Oxford Street and running into Bond Street, which they could see from their windows filled then, as now, with a fashionable throng. Popularity, however, is seldom attained without some sacrifices.

"Our drawing-room<sup>2</sup> became a sort of *levée*, which very much broke in upon my father's time and occupa-

<sup>1</sup> "Vingt fois," he wrote, "en lisant cet ouvrage digne de Salluste et de Tacite des sanglots m'ont empêché de continuer."

<sup>2</sup> *Reminiscences*.

tions. Our emigrant friends, who came in and out all day and at all hours, formed much the best part of our society, for most of them were distinguished men.<sup>1</sup> Besides those I have mentioned we often saw Cicé, the old Archbishop of Bordeaux; the Archbishop of Aix, a courtly, eloquent, high-bred ecclesiastic of a noble family; the Prince de Poix, the Baron de Gilliers, the Abbé Lajare, Panat; Bourmont, the Vendéan chief, afterwards General of Division under Napoleon—a clever, graceful, insinuating person; Pozzo di Borgo who subsequently became a favourite of the Emperor Alexander and his Ambassador at Paris after 1814, and was one of the most active and influential agents in the great political events which began at Moscow and terminated at Waterloo: a true Corsican, but possessing extraordinary sagacity and talents.

“We likewise saw a good deal of our own countrymen—Dumont, Saladin, D’Yvernois, Dr. Marcet, De la Rive, and several Swiss and Genevese young men who had settled in this country after the Revolution.”

The reputation of the new journal was more than sustained by subsequent numbers. Plenty of material for useful comment was supplied by the respective positions of France and the other European states,<sup>2</sup> the Egyptian expedition, the battle of the Nile and the failure of General Humbert’s descent on Ireland, and

<sup>1</sup> “Chateaubriand was then in England, and gave an evening lecture at M. Malouet’s, at which he read *Atala* and some sketches of his subsequent work, *Le Génie du Christianisme*. Many persons of note among the emigrants were there, and Calonne and my father were of the number. After the lecture, my father said to the persons near him, ‘Il y a du talent dans tout cela, mais je ne comprends rien à ses harmonies de la Nature et de la Religion’; in which opinion Calonne concurred.” The conjunction of the two names is interesting and the comment characteristic. (*Reminiscences*.)

<sup>2</sup> The fourth number, which contained a remarkable paper on the political relations and situation of the Continental States, was at least as successful as the essay on Switzerland.



finally by the successful efforts of the British Government to form a new coalition by means of an alliance with Russia against the Directory. Mallet du Pan did his utmost to remove the jealous alarm of the Austrians at the prospect of admitting the Russian forces into the German States by drawing attention to the real danger, the resolute and unbounded ambition of the Republican Government, which, as he said, had "placed Europe under an interdict," and "was devouring it leaf by leaf like an artichoke". He followed in his pages the early brilliant successes of the northern confederacy and their reconquests, succeeded however by the defeat of the British and Russians in Holland and that of Suwarow at Zürich; reverses due mainly as usual to the mistakes of the allies, of which Mallet specially signalised the cruel devastation of Switzerland by the foreign troops and the consequent disastrous and impolitic alienation of Swiss sympathies. In December he gave an account of the budget opened by Pitt (on the 3rd), which he described as being rather a complete course of public economy than a ministerial discourse; "one of the finest works of positive and speculative finance which have ever distinguished the pen of a philosopher or of a statesman".<sup>1</sup> As the winter, which was a very severe one, went on, and communication with the Continent became more difficult, he was thrown more and more on his own resources to fill the pages of the *Mercure*. For almost two months his correspondence from abroad was suspended, fifteen Hamburg mails arriving together on the 16th of March. To this time belong several papers of general interest, such as

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gladstone quoted this account in his own great budget speech in 1853.

those on the anarchy of European political systems and on the Union with Ireland, notably however one on the influence of philosophical writings as one of the causes of the French Revolution.<sup>1</sup>

It was not long before the vigour and independence with which Mallet du Pan exercised his newly found privilege to write, think and speak, involved him in difficulties with his French readers. Their hopes had survived even the 18th of Fructidor, and they were displeased that he would not flatter them with the prospect of an early settlement of affairs. The fulfilment of his gloomy anticipations did not make him more popular with them, and they had not relished his insistence on the necessity of prosecuting the war. The "King" who had never forgiven his condemnation of the Verona manifesto held no communication with him, but his brother, Monsieur (the Comte d'Artois), had soon after his arrival in London written him a long and flattering letter<sup>2</sup> in reply to one from Mallet counselling patience and inaction. In this letter Monsieur urged him to use all the influence he conceived him to possess with the British Cabinet, in favour of continued efforts to reimpose the Bourbon dynasty on France: '*Parlez, tonnez, ne craignez pas d'en trop dire à un cabinet qui sait apprécier votre opinion*'. But when he went on to speak of the necessity of a restoration by armed intervention if the King were to preserve sufficient authority to govern a great people, and to deprecate any transaction or compromise, he was running directly counter to the views of the man he was

<sup>1</sup> *Merc. Brit.*, No. 14, 10th March 1799. See appendix for the latter part of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> Sayous, vol. ii., pp. 502-508.

pretending to consult ; and events having again during the early months of 1799 become more favourable to the fortunes of the Princes, Mallet's advice was for the time neither sought nor tendered, and he was left unmolested by the ultra-Royalists, who, however, jealously scanned his pages for any expressions reflecting on the *ancien régime* or showing a leaning towards constitutional modifications.

As his son wrote :—<sup>1</sup>

“ His English readers respected his talents and character, and caring little for the fanciful distinctions and shades of opinion by which the royalists were divided, they only saw in my father a man thoroughly in earnest, who was on the right side of the question, and wrote with great spirit and independence ; and this ought to have been the feeling of all persons hostile to the French Revolution. But the same jealousy of liberal opinions which had excluded the Intendant of Brittany from the circle of the President of Boisgelin in a Paris prison during the Reign of Terror, watched with a scrutinizing and jealous eye every opinion and even *expression* in my father's writings which might be construed as inimical to the *ancien régime*. Many of these *Marats à cocarde blanche*, as my father had once called them, derived a very comfortable existence (and some of them a very large income) from the plots and intrigues of which they enjoyed a monopoly, and to which sounder views of policy would have put an end. With such fears as these, and the honest conviction entertained by some of them that no circumstances should induce the Bourbons to bend the knee before Baal, they looked with abhorrence on any man who raised a doubt of their exclusive right to political influence, as well as to British gold.”

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*



Mallet du Pan was only too anxious to avoid controversies which, as he knew from long experience, could serve no useful purpose. With the fresh collapse of the alliance in the summer of 1799, however, the Royalists soon became more aggressive. Mallet's son gives an instance of the lengths to which this sort of feeling could be carried in social intercourse. Their old friend, the Abbé de Lisle, who followed them to London <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "I went and sought them, got them a lodging in Bond Street, at a French bookseller's, and when fairly settled, I listened to and smiled at the poor Abbé's ludicrous account of his adventures; things that, to his mind, had happened to no one else since people had travelled, and which he told with such a mixture of grave and gay, of lamentation and levity, of quotations from La Fontaine and Molière and his own fertile muse, that it would have been an entertainment for an audience. Then who can forget his little smart figure, his ugly, expressive phiz, and turned-up nose? But I have all along said '*they*,' and must explain why. The Abbé de Lisle had a female companion, Mlle Vaudechamp, who had left France with him; a woman without education, coarse in her looks and manners, and who was said to have recourse to rough methods with the poor Abbé, even to occasional use of the poker. The Abbé called her his *niece*, a clerical *nom de guerre*. There were other reports—

" . . . but Fame  
Says things not fit for me to name."

What with his blindness, and her untractable disposition, they were very helpless at first, and altogether on our hands. The Abbé, however, read English, and understood it when spoken distinctly: he knew some of Pope's works almost by heart, and had translated the *Essay on Man* and the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*. Pope was the Abbé's model; but he (Pope) had a finer imagination and stronger conception. Rivarol used to say of the Abbé de Lisle's writings, that he was too anxious to secure the success of each verse, and neglected the fortune of the work. His exquisite ear, and great exactness and elegance, are no doubt among his chief merits; and

was dining one day at their house in company with Malouet, Bertrand de Moleville and De la Rive of Geneva, when he suddenly observed '*Le Roi ne doit retourner en France qu'à travers un pied de sang*'. Mallet expostulated with him observing that there was hardly a person in the room who would not fall under the axe of such exterminating maxims, upon which the Abbé quite beside himself turned to Malouet and said, '*Et vous, vous méritez d'être pendu !*'

Such feelings as these made a collision sooner or later inevitable, and the incident had better be given in the words of the younger Mallet.

"It would have been better for my father's peace of mind if he had left the hostility of these excited politicians unnoticed ; but it assailed him from so many quarters, and in so many shapes—in pamphlets, letters and society—that he lost his patience, and exposed their narrowness and political bigotry, their mischievous opinions and unrelenting disposition, in terms which could never be forgiven. It was on the occasion of a letter of Malouet's, printed in the number for July 1799, on the subject of some notions then entertained that a large party in France was desirous of establishing a constitutional monarchy, and would offer the crown to the Duke of Orleans or some foreign prince to the exclusion of the legitimate princes. Malouet expatiated on the impolicy of those views, which he ascribed to two causes—first, to the ignorance in which the French people were kept of the real sentiments of Louis XVIII. ; and secondly, to the character of the war on the part of the allies. This letter was not, in my opinion, very judicious ; but the clamour raised

he must be ranked, as well as Pope, among those of the *eloquentia genus* who are distinguished for the *pressum et mite et limitum*, rather than for the *plenum et erectum, et audax, et praecelesum*" (*Reminiscences*).

against it was altogether founded on the opinion of the writer that the King was ready to make great sacrifices of authority, and to lend himself to any system of conciliation which might unite in one common interest all the friends of a limited monarchy. This was not to be borne, and Malouet was, therefore, assailed from all quarters, and treated like a traitor or an apostate. He was attacked with peculiar violence by a clever, unprincipled royalist writer, Peltier, who was then engaged in a periodical work called the *Ambigu*. My father, therefore, came forward in his next number for August 1799:—

“ ‘ Quelqu’un s’avise-t-il de proclamer l’indulgence, la clémence, la justice du Roi ; son aversion pour le pouvoir arbitraire, son discernement sur ce que les opinions de son siècle renferment d’erreurs à repousser ou de connaissances à ménager ? Des cris s’élèvent pour contredire cet éloge, pour en diffamer l’objet, et apprendre à la France que les vertus du Roi sont autant de chimères. . . . On leur parle de *Gouvernement légal* : ils ne veulent ni légalité ni Gouvernement. L’art d’administrer les sociétés humaines est pour eux le sabre et le potence . . . ils ne veulent de lois que celles qui mettent le peuple sous leur dépendance sans leur en imposer aucune. . . . Ils méprisent toute Restauration qui terminerait les malheurs de la France et les périls de l’Europe, à moins qu’elle ne rendit à une poignée de privilégiés le droit de disposer à leur gré, et exclusivement, du Monarque et de la Monarchie.<sup>1</sup> . . . Quelqu’éclatant néanmoins que puisse être le *crescendo* de leurs clameurs lorsqu’ils voyent le sens commun approcher du Capitole, il faut désabuser les français et l’étranger sur les intentions du Roi de la majorité des émigrés, et sur l’effervescence d’individus isolés, pour

<sup>1</sup> It is only necessary to read the last proclamation of the Directory to the French people signed by Sieyès, 17 Fructidor, An 7, to realise how the language used by these “ultras” played the game of the Republicans (See *Merc. Brit.*, No. 25, 25th Sept. 1799).



qui la Révolution est encore et sera toujours une *révolte de faubourgs*.’

“These strictures, and an expression of great severity indirectly applied to Peltier, produced a perfect storm in the circles of pure Royalism ; and Peltier henceforth became a bitter and irreconcilable enemy. What most annoyed these avengers of the Throne and the Altar was my father’s taking upon himself to disavow their opinions on behalf of the King. They held that he had no authority for so doing, and that the King’s conscience was exclusively in their keeping. I am not sure that an appeal to the King himself would have been very safe. But my father, nevertheless, had his vouchers, and he was fully entitled to make use of them for so useful a purpose ; for, as he justly observed,

“‘No exertions of the Royalists can be of any advantage to the King, as the circumstances of his situation and the political state of France do not admit of his availing himself either of their services or opinions : what is of importance to him, however, is to conciliate the mass of his subjects that are now estranged from him, to weaken opposition and hostile wishes, to disarm the fears of those who might really serve him if they thought they could do it with safety.

“It was but lately that my father had transmitted to the King, through the Marshal de Castries, two letters from Portalis,<sup>1</sup> full of sense and practical wisdom, expatiating on this very topic, and which are now in my possession, together with the Marshal’s answer, expressing his entire concurrence in the views they contain. My father had likewise been in correspondence with Monsieur, who, whatever might be his real sentiments, also expressed his concurrence in my father’s views, and the highest opinion of his judgment and sagacity.”

<sup>1</sup> For these important letters, see Sayous, ii., 393-400.

On this occasion accordingly Monsieur came to London, openly blamed his adherents, and sending for Malouet and Mallet du Pan expressed to them his vexation that they should have been exposed to this hostility of persons professing to be the friends of his family.

It was the least that he could do, for Malouet's letter which had led to the storm had been inserted at the express desire of Louis XVIII. Mallet gave an account of the interview<sup>1</sup> which obliged him to cut short a few days' much-needed holiday in a friend's house at Reigate, in a letter to Sainte-Aldegonde. The Bishop of Arras, the Comte d'Escars and the agent Dutheil had, he said, the mortification of witnessing his reception by Monsieur, who talked alone with him for twenty minutes and who listened with apparent approval, when he insisted on the unfortunate effect upon opinion in France of the publication of such attacks as those of which he and Malouet had been the victims. '*A la fin c'était moi qui me trouvais l'aristocrate le plus entier !*' Sainte-Aldegonde in reply warned him that the Prince's action was '*un hommage forcé et de circonstance*,' and that at the first success of the allied armies they would no longer condescend to look at him. "The Princes will remain what they are ; they will never employ *que des espèces*, and Monsieur with all his gracious affability is no more likely to change than others." Sainte-Aldegonde knew his man, and Mallet, who can hardly have needed the warning, is found writing February 1800,<sup>2</sup> "I have not seen Monsieur again ; he associates only with his courtiers, and is more adulated than at Versailles. . . . I earnestly desire to be absolutely forgotten in that

<sup>1</sup> Sayous, ii., 404.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 435.

quarter ; there is nothing to be done with persons who are not honest (*des gens qui ne sont pas vrais*)."

The tide indeed seemed once more to be running in favour of the royal house of France, for by the end of the summer it had become evident that the days of the Directory were numbered. Never during ten years of upheaval had government been more powerless or anarchy in every department more rampant. Taxes were unpaid, conscripts refused to come in, robbery, crime and open rebellion were unpunished, Jacobinism could no longer be galvanised into life ; while even in war fortune had deserted the Republic, for the victorious close of the campaign in Holland and Switzerland was more than counterbalanced by the fiasco of the French in Egypt and Bonaparte's desertion of his army. This time, however, Mallet did not pretend to share the hopes of the royalist party, he expected nothing from the representatives of the monarchy, and he confined himself to commenting on passing events and indicating the line of action which a true royalist party, had one existed, might perhaps even then successfully have followed by taking advantage of the movement after the 30th of Prairial towards restraining the prerogative of the Directory. There is a reflection in his writing of the spirit of apathy, of discouragement, of disillusionment, which in France had succeeded the fever of revolutionary enthusiasm ; and again we notice the disbelief he had often expressed in the importance of individuals in times of revolution. "A dogmatic revolution may create instruments, never permanent leaders, for it is of the essence of revolution to recognise no authority, no superiority. In the presence of its terrible genius men appear no more



than shadows.”<sup>1</sup> Barras and Sieyès indeed dominated the Directory without dominating France, and they were intent only on bringing about the inevitable end in such a manner as to secure impunity and fortune for themselves. Barras had sunk to intrigues with royalist agents, and in return for his promises of assistance in a restoration had obtained from Louis XVIII. letters patent assuring him against all punishment, and granting him an immense pension. The machinations of Sieyès were of more importance and interest. He too, convinced that the Republic was dead, was casting about for some combination which would secure his own position. At first it was the Archduke Charles to be married to Madame Royale and enthroned in France ; then some general who was to be the instrument of a *coup d'État*, Joubert, Jourdan, Macdonald, Bernadotte, but not yet the absent and almost forgotten Bonaparte, whose coadjutor he had been in Fructidor. From the first the character, the ambition, the aims and methods of the Abbé Sieyès had set him apart and attracted the attention of Mallet du Pan, who made him the subject of one of his few elaborate portraits. Superior as he was to the mob of agitators he was not the man to see France a prey to their intrigues without endeavouring to become their master. The political metaphysician had qualities which eminently fitted him for the task he set himself. Fertile in resource, he could wait in silence without conceiving chimerical plans ; he united dexterity and constancy, and no one, when a great occasion demanded it, “could better preserve control over himself, or obtain it over others”.

<sup>1</sup> *Merc. Brit.*, No. 22.

Sieyès was to be the author of the general plan and of the preparatory steps of the *coup d'État*. But when the time had come the necessary impulsion for another change could only be found in military force. '*Il me faut une épée*,' he exclaimed in an epigram which ended, as another had begun,<sup>1</sup> the Revolution; he sought a sword, however, which should be his servant, not his master. When Bonaparte adopted the scheme prepared by him, the civil arm sank into insignificance; the famous constitution, the most impracticable but the most ingenious system of checks and balances ever devised, was adopted shorn of all its distinctive features, and the philosopher who had been the oracle and epitome of the revolutionary epoch ended his days as a count and a pensioner.<sup>2</sup> It has been said that, while his position was one of opposition to the historical school of Montesquieu, he was not more in harmony with the logical school of

<sup>1</sup> Sainte-Beuve has collected the epigrams with which Sieyès "baptised" the supreme moments of the Revolution.

At the opening of the States-General he asked, "Qu'est-ce que le Tiers-État?" and replied, "C'est tout!"

At the breach of the Two Orders with the deputies of the Third Estate, he gave the latter the title of "National Assembly".

When the National Assembly, yielding to passion and intrigue, began to go astray in its labours, he exclaimed, "Ils veulent être libres et ils ne savent pas être justes!"

After the Terror he pronounced the pregnant words, "J'ai vécu," and when he saw the failure of the Directory, "*Il me faut une épée*" (*Causeries*, vol. v., p. 205).

<sup>2</sup> He was given the estate of Crône with an immense revenue.

Sieyès à Bonaparte avait promis un trône  
Sous ses débris brillants voulant l'ensevelir;  
Bonaparte à Sieyès fait présent de Crône  
Pour le payer et l'avilir.

Rousseau. His favourite studies had always been of an abstract character ; this taste was in him intensified by a positive aversion for the study of history, and to judge of the present by the past was with him to judge of the known by the unknown. In his incapacity for any but *à priori* methods in politics he belonged to the revolutionary tribe ; he differed from them, and this it was that gave him his strength, in his conception of the possibilities of democratic society. He believed, as they did not, in representative government. The elaborate constitutional schemes to which Sieyès clung all through the Revolution attest his constant effort to escape from the logical conclusion of the doctrines of Rousseau as exemplified in the Jacobin experiment of government. The Directorial system, in so far as it drew a line between the different functions of government, was the fruit of his genius ; in so far as it lacked the *jury constitutionnaire*, a plan for the further division and balance of powers, he repudiated it. He long refused a seat in the Directory, but remained their political adviser, a step in accordance with his dislike of open responsibility, his talent of "doing evil as Providence does good without being perceived". The whole passage in which Mallet has described this *Catalina en petit collet* is a masterpiece of satiric portraiture :—

"L'Abbé Sieyès est l'homme le plus dangereux qu'ait fait connaître la révolution. Dès le premier jour il l'a mesurée théoriquement, mais sans en prévoir les horribles conséquences. Républicain avant les états-généraux de 1789, il n'a pas perdu un jour de vue le renversement du trône, de l'Église, de la religion catholique et de la noblesse. Heureusement cet opiniâtre et pénétrant novateur est le plus lâche des mortels :



aussitôt qu'il a vu le danger, il s'est enseveli dans l'obscurité. Quiconque lui fera peur le maîtrisera toujours. Misanthrope atrabilaire, de l'orgueil le plus exclusif, impatient et concentré, charlatan impérieux et jaloux, ennemi de tout mérite supérieur au sien, personne n'a plus que lui l'art de s'emparer des esprits en affectant le seul langage de la raison, de couvrir d'apparences plus froides ses passions, son maintien, son style. Dans un pays où tout le monde se mêle de raisonner et où les prestiges de la philosophie ont séduit tous les rangs, l'abbé Sieyès est un homme important. Cependant, jamais il n'obtint ni dans la première assemblée constituante, ni dans la convention actuelle, dont il est membre, de crédit permanent. Mirabeau, qui le connaissait, le méprisait et le haïssait, l'avait réduit au silence. . . . Il est capable d'ordonner les plus grands crimes pour faire adopter ses théories. Nul ne prémédita plus longtemps, plus froidement, avec plus de réflexion, l'abolition de la Royauté. Ennemi de tout pouvoir dont il ne sera pas le directeur spirituel, il a anéanti la noblesse parce qu'il n'était pas noble, son ordre parce qu'il n'était pas archevêque, les grands propriétaires parce qu'il n'était pas riche, et il renverserait tous les trônes parce que la nature ne l'a pas fait roi."<sup>1</sup>

All this time the rival intriguers believed, or tried to believe, that Bonaparte, all-powerful as he had been after Fructidor, no longer counted. Thirteen months of exile in Africa, by turns glorious and ignominious, might well have buried his renown; already he was beginning to be forgotten when his reappearance in Provence on the 9th of October, and his triumphant progress from Fréjus to Paris, showed that he was the hero and deliverer for whom the people were waiting.

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence for Vienna*, i., 127, 28th Feb. 1795.

Even then, and after the scene in the Orangery of Saint-Cloud and the establishment of the Consulate, the significance of his return was curiously little realised outside France. Mallet du Pan no more than others had foreseen this turn of events, but he was almost alone among the *émigrés* in his immediate comprehension of its meaning and its consequences. Among a party of his friends at his own house when the news of Bonaparte's landing was received, and when most of those present spoke of it as an event of no importance and of Bonaparte as a man of lost character and influence, Mallet du Pan expressed a different opinion, and observed that it was an event big with consequences to France and to Europe. The *émigrés* for weeks continued to hug the delusion that the First Consul was a new Monk who had made his *coup d'État* in order to replace the crown on the head of Louis XVIII., and the King himself caused negotiations to be opened with the First Consul, and even wrote to him direct. Mallet combated the notion in the *Mercure*, and in his private letters spoke of these poor "innocent *émigrés* who . . . would be still at their A B C if the Revolution lasted a century. . . . I will not disguise my opinion that the re-establishment of Louis XVIII. and the old monarchy is adjourned to a distant future."

Now at all events the ascendancy of Napoleon's genius is clear to Mallet du Pan; and the "contemporary historian" is seen at his best in the luminous and eloquent pages in which he expresses his judgment on the last phase of the revolutionary era which he lived to witness. He would not have had cause to modify the words he used on the conqueror's return from Egypt

upon which he had commented in a vein of irony,<sup>1</sup> not unworthy of Voltaire.

"Able and energetic in action," he wrote, "mock-heroic in speech, never were valour and contempt for humanity, capacity and false greatness, intelligence and ignorant jugglery, insolent immodesty and splendid qualities, united to the same degree as in this man, extraordinary rather than great."

If after Brumaire, continues Mallet, he refused the title of Dictator, Protector or Prince, it was assuredly not with the intention of restoring to his country its legitimate sovereign according to the frivolous opinion of the Royalists. Master of France in the Avenue of Saint-Cloud, it was upon his own head that Bonaparte would place the crown, if crown indeed there was to be. In a situation of this kind a man had rarely a fixed or definite object, he must wait upon events.

". . . His head is in the clouds, his career is a poem, his imagination a storehouse of heroic romance, and his stage is large enough for all the excesses of his will

<sup>1</sup> For instance : "Les plus hardis de ces romanciers, soutenus de la tourbe des idiots, n'ont pas manqué à attribuer ce retour au zèle de Bonaparte pour le bien public, et à son désir de réparer les défaites des armées républicaines. Sans nous permettre de deviner ses pensées intimes, il nous paraît assez positif qu'il a saisi avec empressement le moment favorable où il était ramené sur la côte pour terminer sa captivité. Quelque délicieuses qu'aient pu être les séances de l'Institut National du Caire, l'éducation philosophe des Cophtes, des Arabes et des Mamloucks, et l'admirable constitution dont il a doué ces nouveaux élus, l'avenir demeurerait inquiétant ; ses nuages rendaient encore plus regrettables les charmes de la Métropole, le fracas des éloges, et les destinées plus brillantes que Bonaparte avait daigné sacrifier au rôle de Législateur d'un peuple nu et sans esprit" (*Merc. Brit.*, No. 28, 10th Dec. 1799).



or his ambition. Who can decide where he will stop? Is he sufficiently master of events and of time, of his own sentiments, of his own future to decide it for himself?"<sup>1</sup>

Nor was Mallet du Pan mistaken in his view of the revolution of the 10th November 1799 which seemed to him of a new order, in its way as fundamental as that of 1789. "The materials, means, results and authors were all different; it was the first time the military element had triumphed over the civil power." He could not share the opinion of those who, when they discovered that Bonaparte had made the *coup d'État* for himself, imagined that his reign and his political system would not last a month, who harped on the *Chouans*, on the exhaustion of the country and its finances, on the Jacobins and the other common-places which had done yeoman service since the beginning of the war. Projects of *Chouannerie* fill him "with shame and horror," and as for counter-revolution by means of foreign war, "people might as well talk of conquering the moon". "Bonaparte is king. . . . For my part, I see an immense power placed in the hands of a man who knows how to use it, who has on his side both the army and the people." No one described with more impartial care the measures taken by the First Consul to restore settled Government to France by concentrating power in his own hands, by reforming and purifying the administration, by confirming the rights of property created by the Revolution, by assimilating such of its principles (that of equality, for instance) as had taken root in the hearts

<sup>1</sup> *Merc. Brit.*, No. 28, 10th Dec. 1799.

of the people, by reopening the churches, by putting down disorder and faction (the miserable *Chouan* rising was conquered more by persuasion and concession than by arms), by reconciling discordant opinions, and by availing himself of the services of men of talent of all parties who were willing to devote themselves to him. Recognising, as Mallet honestly did, the success of a policy which in many of its essentials he had for years pressed upon his Royalist friends, and witnessing their continued blindness ("the compensation for their miseries which Providence has happily provided for them") he may be pardoned for a certain fatalistic resignation. It is easy to understand the spirit in which he wrote:—

"In truth when one sees how the affairs of the world are managed, how after eight years of experience it is always the same circle of visionary obstinacy in the teeth of evidence, of misunderstanding, of divisions, of egoism, one loses all interest in the future."

For Mallet du Pan of all men could not have become a convert to the new Cæsarism, as many of the *émigrés* and some of his own associates were to do. It has been noted as a curious fact that the extreme Royalists seemed to have less antipathy to the Empire than they had displayed to a constitutional Monarchy. "The *émigrés*," he writes in February 1800, "are returning in crowds, and among them many of the greatest names in France."

Mallet du Pan recognised indeed with satisfaction that new prospects of order were opening for France, and he saw the advantage of the exercise of a firm and tutelary government by a man in whose talents the people had confidence. But there is nothing to show

that he would have become reconciled to a system which was faithfully to carry out the revolutionary traditions in its contempt for the rights of nations, or that a man who had so retained his faith in free government that at the end of the century he could pen an elaborate panegyric upon the career of Washington, would have acquiesced in a Government, beneficial indeed compared with anarchy from which it sprang, but directly opposed to that liberal political system which had been the distinction of Switzerland, and whose traditions now lingered only in America and England. It is not difficult to predict on which side his sympathies would have been in the gigantic struggle which the unscrupulous ambition of Napoleon was so soon to force upon Europe, for he was one of those who saw in the character of the conqueror, no less than in that of the new form of government, a menace to the peace of the world.

“Do we find,” he asked, “at Milan, at Pavia, in Malta or in Egypt, a man loyal to his agreements, scrupulous in respecting incontestable rights, faithful in his promises, his proclamations, his solemn engagements, brotherly to the friends of France, just to neutral Powers, impressed with the feeling that war is in itself a sufficient curse without adding to it the systematic ruin of citizens and of the most useful public institutions, and conspiracies against peaceful and flourishing Governments?”

The consequences however of the Imperial *régime* to France and to Europe Mallet du Pan did not live to see, and meanwhile the favourable account he gave in the *Mercure* of the firm and conciliatory system of government which was being established in France



exposed him to misrepresentations and to charges of inconsistency and altered opinions from persons, many of whom were to be found a few years later among the most assiduous of courtiers at the Tuileries. Had it not been for these repeated contentions, which acquired exaggerated importance from the fact that Mallet and his family lived so much with French *émigrés*, their life would have been in many respects agreeable. The *Mercur* continued to be successful the net receipts of the first year having exceeded £1,000, and the author's house was frequented by many distinguished and well-informed people. But his health had long been a source of deep anxiety to his family. The climate of London, '*ce gouffre de vapeurs infernales*,' as he called it, was specially unfavourable to him, and from London, except for an occasional few days at a time, he could not escape while he was obliged every fortnight to turn out a political essay of sixty-four pages under all circumstances of health, spirits and public intelligence, without assistance except that of his son, who took upon himself the business connected with the printing, correspondence, accounts and postal arrangements. A very severe winter had been followed in 1799 by a cold and wet summer which proved very injurious to Mallet du Pan's health, and the French doctor whom he consulted totally misunderstood his case and assured his family that there was no cause for anxiety, though his wasted form and constant cough could leave no doubt of the progress of his malady.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The admirable portrait by his countryman, J. F. Rigaud, R.A., reproduced at the beginning of this volume, was painted about this time, and it gives the idea of a man of seventy rather than of his real

"In January 1800," writes the younger Mallet, "Lady Holderness, the widow of the last Earl of that name, from whom my father had received many attentions, was so struck with his altered looks that she requested her physician Sir Gilbert Blane to call on him. Sir Gilbert immediately saw that the case was nearly hopeless, and all he could do was to forbid a stimulating diet, administer opiates, and entreat my father, if possible, to withdraw from all occupations."

The situation was indeed as nearly desperate as it well could be. After a gallant struggle for independence, Mallet found himself face to face with the necessity of giving up the sole provision for his family, and though he had at least as much claim on the bounty of the British Government as "the host of plotting *émigrés* who drew thousands from the public purse for the most unworthy and mischievous purposes," he could not easily bring himself to ask for such assistance. In his extremity, however, he set out his difficulties in a remarkable letter to his friend, Wickham, then Minister Plenipotentiary with the allied armies in Germany :—

"Whatever resolution and exertion I may summon to my aid, I can succeed but imperfectly in overcoming the undermining influence of this painful malady. The

age, which was under fifty. Mallet's son speaks of the tone, truth of expression, and careful finish of the picture, and adds: "Those friends who did not see him at this latter period of his life complain that they do not recognise in his picture the wonted animation of his eye and countenance 'the precursors of the tongue'; but premature age had quenched this living spark, and nothing was then left of him but that pensive look, that softened and thoughtful expression, on which I love to dwell; for it is my last, my dearest recollection of him!"

physicians I have consulted agree in considering the climate of London and eight hours of sedentary and mental occupation as in the highest degree injurious to me. My present publication is my sole means of subsistence. It has supplied all the wants of my family during the past year ; but independently of some drawbacks, such as the income tax, and although the subscriptions have not fallen off, its popularity and success would be permanently injured by any carelessness of composition : and yet I feel that I am no longer capable of giving it the same degree of interest. Other circumstances have rendered my task more burdensome than it might have been, such as the ill-humour and complaints of Foreign Ministers, to which I have been subjected, and the calumnies and angry ebullitions of French emigrants, and more particularly of those who are distinguished as the King's confidential agents. Were I assured that these hostile feelings had no influence on the Government I should have disregarded them ; but I cannot but deeply feel my not having received the slightest mark of approbation from any of the Ministers. I am altogether ignorant of the opinion they may entertain either of myself or my publication. I am altogether in the dark as to their own views, and therefore without security as to those I express.

“You have approved, and every reasonable man must have approved, my asserting that degree of independence of tone and opinion which was absolutely necessary to the character of my work ; but in the peculiar situation in which I was placed, I might nevertheless have expected to be furnished with some index by which to regulate the exercise of it. On no one occasion have I received any communication or intelligence from the Foreign Office ; and notwithstanding the zeal and kindness of Mr. Flint, even the French papers reach me irregularly, and those I do receive are nearly useless for my purpose as they are all Royalist



papers, whereas what I want is to learn the views and opinions of the French Government and of the faction whose influence has hitherto been predominant.

“Were I still in the vigour of life and with my faculties unimpaired, I might perhaps overcome these difficulties ; but I am altogether unequal to the task of resisting the progress of a painful and debilitating malady and at the same time of prosecuting under all circumstances of body and mind, and with the requisite energy of purpose, a work of which a single paragraph incautiously expressed may compromise my reputation and peace of mind.

“I have not yet considered, nor can I at present fix on any plan by means of which I might supply the wants of my family if I should be under the necessity of relinquishing the *Mercure*. Many friends urge my having recourse to the bounty of the British Government ; and it is at their solicitations that I now trouble you with these personal details. But I do not participate in their confidence. I have no claims on the Government, and I am not acquainted with any of the Ministers. Besides that, I am the most awkward of suitors when I am personally concerned. Indeed, I do not see what reasonable motives I could urge for granting to a stranger what an Englishman does not always obtain after long public services.

“I feel it due to my family, however, to submit these difficulties to you. Were any allowance to be granted to me by the Government, I should at least wish to earn it in some way or other, and that I might not eat the bread of idleness. It seems not unreasonable to suppose in the present aspect of affairs that some employment connected with objects of public utility might be found for me. Too much of an invalid to be any longer a *stage-coach driver*, starting at the same hour in all weather, I may possibly retain such a share of health as might enable me to follow occupations of a less laborious and less critical nature.

"I rely on your usual kindness to assist me with your opinion and advice. If all idea of interesting the Government in my favour be chimerical, I will lose no time in turning my mind to such literary resources as may be within my reach, and may secure my family against absolute want. Pray excuse this indiscreet request. You are the only friend to whom I could have submitted such an application; and you are, I believe, sufficiently acquainted with me to feel assured that the most urgent circumstances could alone have wrung it from me. You will receive it with indulgence, and consider it as a proof of my unbounded confidence in your kindness and regard."

This letter did not reach Wickham till the following March, by which time Mallet du Pan had been obliged to abandon the editorship of the *Mercure*. Wickham replied on the 24th of March that he would communicate Mallet's situation and wishes to Lord Grenville by a messenger then leaving Augsburg for London. "Do not be impatient if you do not receive an immediate answer," he wrote, "but rest assured that I will neglect nothing that may tend to serve you, though, God knows, I shall not be able to do much."

Meanwhile Mallet du Pan had retired to Richmond, where Lally-Tollendal had a house which he placed at his disposal. On the 11th of April, three weeks only before his death, he wrote again to Mr. Wickham in the following terms:—

"The rapid progress of my complaint has baffled all my calculations, and put an end to the views I submitted to you by a letter of the 20th of January last, to which I have not received any answer. Since the date of that letter I have been in a constant state of suffering, aggravated by the cruel efforts necessary

for completing the last number of the *Mercur*. At last I am compelled to close with the thirty-sixth number. My physician forbids application of any kind, and a total loss of strength renders such directions superfluous.

"I have thought it due to you, to apprise you of the termination of the *Mercur* previously to my announcing it publicly in my thirty-sixth number, which is almost entirely the work of friends.

"Little did I anticipate this sad close of my labours when I came to this country under your friendly auspices. My career of utility is now closed, and the suggestions contained in my last letter to you rendered unavailing. I cannot contemplate without the deepest concern my own situation and that of my family; left as I am without resources in the dearest country in Europe, where a long illness exhausts a small fortune; in an ungenial climate, with bitter thoughts of the past, and unavailing anxiety for the future. No resource is left me but resignation and trust in God; and to recommend my children to those who, like you, have never ceased to give me proof of regard."

There is every reason to believe, in spite of the generous provision made for his family after his death, that Wickham's intervention would not have availed to procure assistance for Mallet du Pan had he lived, for the moderate tone of his strictures on Bonaparte's early administration, and the strong sympathy of Grenville and Pitt with the ultra-Royalists seem to have indisposed them towards him. Friendly offices, however, were not wanting from other quarters.

"Malouet<sup>1</sup> took charge of the last number of the *Mercur*: Lally lent us his country house at Richmond: kind offers poured in from all sides. Sir J.

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*



Macpherson was, I believe, incessant in his solicitations with the Government, and did not neglect his private friends. Among those who were foremost in generous sympathy I must not forget Sir William Pulteney, who sent Sir J. Macpherson £100, to be applied to my father's use, 'in the way' (according to his considerate expression) 'that would be the least painful to his feelings'. My father likewise received on the occasion of his announcing the suspension of his work, many letters expressing the strongest sense of respect for his character and writings. Some other kindly rays came in to relieve this dark hour. Mr. Rose, Secretary of the Treasury, whose financial work I had translated the year before, most kindly gave me a situation of Foreign Translator or Examiner of Public Accounts in the Audit Office, worth £250 per annum; and a few days previously to my father's death, Sir John Macpherson received an assurance from the Speaker of the House of Commons, Mr. Addington, that the Government intended making some provision for my mother. These were great alleviations, and afforded as much comfort to my father as he was then capable of receiving from anything."

The end can best be told in the words of Mallet du Pan's devoted son :—

"Count Lally's house at Richmond was situated in a lane leading from the church to the bridge. It was too small to accommodate all our family; I therefore remained in town, going as often as I could to Richmond. My father was attended by Mr. Dundas, the King's Serjeant-Surgeon, afterwards Sir David Dundas; a man of great penetration, judgment, and skill, and no less distinguished by his kindness and humanity to the numerous French emigrant families then residing at Richmond. I cannot speak of his attentions to my father in terms of sufficient gratitude. Seeing my

mother's spirits extremely depressed, he naturally dwelt on such circumstances of improvement as the change of air and scene had produced : my father had better nights and a better appetite ; he took several drives in Richmond Park, and walked occasionally in the garden, all which tended to confirm our hopes. I do not believe, however, that he was himself deceived ; he was more than usually silent, and there was a look of settled pensiveness and deep meditation in his eye, which left no doubt as to the direction of his thoughts. He often read the Bible, and sent for some sermons of Mouchon, a Genevese clergyman, which had been lately published ; the only indications he gave by which to judge of the state of his mind.

“Early in May, some of my friends (Genevese) having made a party to go to Henley on the Saturday and remain there till the Monday, they pressed me to accompany them. I had intended going to my family at Richmond on that day, but receiving a letter from my sister giving a more comfortable account of my father, I determined on joining my friends on their little excursion. On my return on the Monday morning into the City, I found a few lines from my sister which she had sent by express, written in terms somewhat obscure, but which gave me reason to apprehend the worst. My father had died in the night !<sup>1</sup> Nothing in the preceding day had indicated greater weakness or danger, and he had retired to rest as usual ; but on approaching his bed at an early hour my poor mother found that all was over, apparently without a struggle.

“We had in our misfortune all the comfort and assistance that public and private sympathy can give.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mallet du Pan died on the 10th of May 1800, just two years after his arrival in England.

<sup>2</sup> Even an obituary notice in *The Times* (19th May 1800) was not wanting. It is of some interest as showing the position Mallet du Pan occupied in public estimation at the time of his death :—

“M. MALLET DU PAN.

“M. Mallet du Pan was interred on Thursday last at Richmond.

Malouet and Lally took upon themselves all that our situation required, and they determined, somewhat contrary to my own inclination, but perhaps not improperly, that my father should have a public funeral. At Geneva all funerals are public, inasmuch as the remains of a citizen are followed to the grave by a greater or less concourse of people, according to his popularity or claims to consideration. Friends and persons of all ranks join the procession without any invitation, and from their own impulse, as it proceeds to the place of burial in the vicinity of the town ; and I have seen the funeral of a distinguished citizen attended by hundreds of people. Such would have been the case with my father, had he lived and died in his own native place. Here he was known comparatively to few ; but those few were desirous of paying him one last public mark of respect. Count Lally was rather too pompous a master of the ceremonies for a Swiss family dependent for support on the bounty of Government ; but his feelings and

He died without pain or agony at the house of the Count de Lally, and had nigh completed the 50th year of his age. His countenance was perfectly serene. For a month previous to his death, his friends had entertained no hopes of his recovery. The affliction of his family and friends was to him the most convincing sign of his approaching end.

“ Long before the French Revolution, M. Mallet du Pan was as much distinguished among political writers for the extent of his knowledge and for the vigour of his understanding, as for the probity and independence of his character. Born of a noble family, which for many years has given birth to magistrates of Geneva, and to learned men, M. Mallet du Pan only trod in the footsteps of his ancestors by following the paths of literature. The principles of religion, of social order, of manners, of laws, of the rights of the people and of princes, and the history of man in general, were the subjects which most employed his attention, until the revolutionary tempest developed the whole energy and wisdom of his mind. His writings since the year 1789 form a most valuable collection. He was not a party-writer—neither willing to offend or flatter any one.”



manner were so warm and energetic that he had his own way, not only in marshalling the funeral ceremony, but in giving an account of it in the *Courier de Londres* somewhat highly coloured. The Prince de Poix, Lord Sheffield, Mr. Fagel, *Greffier* to the United States of Holland, and afterwards Minister of the Netherlands in this country, Mr. Trevor afterwards Lord Hampden, Sir John Macpherson, Mr. Whitshed Keene, Member for Montgomeryshire and afterwards Father of the House of Commons, Count Lally, and Malouet, were the pall-bearers ; Mr. Granville Penn, Baron Maseres, Mr. Ryder, Mr. Wollaston, Mr. Sparrow, Mr. Reeves, Mr. Bowles, Mr. John Gifford, and many other persons attended.

“ A few days subsequently to my father's death, Mr. Addington communicated to Sir J. Macpherson that it was the intention of Government to grant a pension of £200 on the Civil List to my mother. The various deductions to which salaries and pensions on the Civil List are subjected, reduced the amount to about £150 per annum ; but even this was very considerable and unexpected favour, often sought in vain by persons of great family and connection in reduced circumstances. It appears by a note from Mr. Trevor to Malouet, that Mr. Pitt had contemplated this act of generous kindness towards my family previously to the Speaker's application to him ; and it is therefore probable that Mr. Wickham's friendly representations to Lord Grenville had not been disregarded. My situation in the Audit Office and my mother's pension constituted a very comfortable provision for us ; but my father's friends nevertheless wished that some public mark of interest should be given to our family ; and Sir William Pulteney, Sir J. Macpherson, and Mr. Whitshed Keene set on foot a public subscription with that view, and they fixed £10 10s. as the maximum to be subscribed by any one individual, by which means they hoped that a great number of respectable persons

might be induced to join in this tribute of respect. They were not disappointed; the subscriptions filled rapidly, and soon amounted to upwards of £1,000, of which the Prince of Brazil subscribed £100. Debts were likewise due to my father by booksellers both in England and at Hamburg, in respect of the sale of the *Mercure*, and although that class of persons are among the worst of debtors, about £1,200 was ultimately collected, which was settled on my mother, together with the amount of the public subscription.”<sup>1</sup>

It may be added that Madame Mallet du Pan after a few months spent in England at Guildford and the neighbourhood settled in Geneva, where her daughter Amélie married in 1803 Dr. Jean Pierre Colladon; the younger daughter, who was in delicate health, remaining with her mother. She survived for sixteen years the husband whose adverse fortunes she had shared with so much courage and devotion. The elder son's career has been alluded to in the preface, the second son, Henri, a very promising young man, went into a business house in London, but did not long survive his father, for a melancholy accident caused his death at Geneva while on a holiday visit to his mother.

NOTE.—The following remarkable appreciation of Mallet du Pan by his daughter, Madame Colladon (who inherited much of his talent and transmitted it to her son, the late M. Eugène Colladon of Geneva), may be inserted in this place. It will serve as preface to the chapter in which I have brought together the various judgments on his character and career, and endeavoured to describe his place as a commentator on the Revolution :—

“Ce qui me paraît le plus intéressant à dire dans la vie de mon père c'est de peindre le caractère moral qui accompagnait son esprit. Il faut parler de cette indépendance d'opinion qui lui a suscité tant d'ennemis, et que tous les gens des divers partis ont si souvent et si

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences.*

vainement tenté d'altérer ; de ce courage avec lequel il brava pendant les années de la Révolution les menaces, les imprécations, les écrits avoués et anonymes, des ennemis de la bonne cause. J'ai vu des révolutionnaires venir chez lui pour le forcer à rétracter tel ou tel article de son journal, en le menaçant de le faire périr s'il résistait à leurs ordres, et mon père leur répondre avec une fermeté pleine de modération et de noblesse, qu'on pouvait le faire assassiner, mais que jamais on ne l'engagerait à désavouer les principes qu'il professait. On a vu un Protestant défendre de tout son talent, et avec l'âme qui animait ses écrits, la Religion Catholique ; et un Républicain défendre les Rois, parce que cette cause était celle de la morale et de la vertu. Menacé de toutes parts, entouré de craintes de ses amis et de sa famille, il est toujours resté inébranlable, et prêt à payer de sa tête la cause qu'il soutenait. Avec la santé la plus frêle, il a constamment montré une intrépidité à toute épreuve ; avec la fortune la plus bornée, le plus noble désintéressement ; et l'élévation de son caractère n'est pas moins remarquable que ses talents. Sa simplicité et sa modestie étaient celles d'un philosophe. Des gens des provinces, des personnes de tout rang venaient lui rendre grâces, le supplier de continuer sa dangereuse tâche, et lui adresser les éloges les plus flatteurs, sans qu'il en prit jamais aucun amour-propre et aucune importance. Jusqu'à son arrivée à Paris, la vie et les écrits de M. Mallet n'offrent rien de remarquable. Associé à Linguet dans la rédaction de ses annales, on distinguait déjà sans doute l'esprit et le talent ; mais cet esprit et ce talent n'ont acquis toute leur force que par l'intérêt de la cause qu'ils ont été appelés à soutenir. Cette verve, cette énergie, cette justesse d'observation, cette chaleur inépuisable, cette hardiesse dans l'expression, tenaient autant à l'âme qu'au talent de mon père ; et ont affiché un cachet particulier et durable à des écrits presque toujours éphémères, et dont l'effet disparaîtrait d'ordinaire avec l'évènement du jour qu'ils racontent. On a reproché à M. Mallet de l'incorrection dans le style. Le reproche est fondé, mais il faut se souvenir qu'il était étranger. Il arriva à Paris en 1783 avec sa femme et ses enfants, auxquels il n'a laissé pour héritage que son nom et la protection de ses nombreux amis. L'extérieur de M. Mallet était agréable. Sa figure noble, expressive, et spirituelle, avait quelque chose d'important. Ses occupations et sa mauvaise santé rendaient sa vie sédentaire. Elle l'eut été par goût. Recherché par la meilleure société de Paris et de Londres, il se bornait à un



petit cercle d'amis et d'hommes de lettres qui se réunissaient chez lui presque tous les soirs. Il avait de la gaieté dans la conversation, parlait avec abondance et facilité, et s'animait surtout chez les autres. La promenade et la musique, voilà ses seules récréations au dehors ! Grand amateur des beautés de la Nature, il s'est promené tant que ses forces le lui ont permis ; et dans les derniers jours de sa vie il jouissait encore des belles vues de Richmond.

“ Il s'est éteint sans souffrance après une longue maladie de poitrine : quittant sans regret une vie troublée par des soucis, des inquiétudes, et des orages de toute espèce.”

## CHAPTER X.

CHARACTER OF MALLET DU PAN AND HIS POSITION  
IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

IT is not too much to say of Mallet du Pan that at a period when political writing was incomparably more brilliant and influential than it has since become, he had before his death taken foremost rank among the opponents of the revolutionary movement.<sup>1</sup> Trusted as he had been by Louis XVI., and finally expelled from his native land by Napoleon, his articles and pamphlets had all through the Revolution been largely circulated in France, they had been read and translated in Germany and in England. He had been consulted by most of the leading statesmen and sovereigns of the Continent, and his services to the common cause had obtained from Pitt at least the acknowledgment of a pension for his widow and a place for his son. Yet his name sank almost at once into comparative obscurity; he was ignored by all the earlier historians of the Revolution, by Thiers, Lamartine, Louis Blanc, Michelet and Carlyle, and it was not until 1851 that the publication of his Memoirs by M. Sayous under the

<sup>1</sup> The opinion of the Prussian publicist Gentz is an adequate piece of evidence on this point. See an article in the *Spectateur du Nord*, in August 1800. There is hardly a phrase in this short but discriminating appreciation of Mallet du Pan which recent criticism has not endorsed.

auspices of his son began the work, resumed at a later date by M. Taine, of making known his life and opinions and restoring him to his place as one of the three or four contemporary observers of the French Revolution whose writings are of capital importance in the history of the time. Disinterred from the dust of libraries and the recesses of government archives, they emerge to-day, to quote M. Taine's expression, as "strong and living as at the time they first issued from his hand". "On écrira l'histoire de la Révolution autrement que Mallet du Pan," writes M. Valette, "on ne l'écrira plus sans lui ni contre lui."<sup>1</sup>

The main cause of the varieties of fortune which the reputation of Mallet du Pan has undergone, of his long neglect and of the reaction in his favour, is to be found in a remark of his own that half a century at least must pass before an impartial account of the Revolution would be possible. The fury of revolutionary and anti-revolutionary partisans, which in life isolated a man of the moderate opinions of Mallet, long continued to assail his memory and prevent an appreciation of his superiority. Forced to fight side by side with allies with whose objects and hopes he was not in sympathy, he was, as we have seen, feared and distrusted alike by the Royalists to whom the *Monarchien* was as odious as the Jacobin, and by the men of the Revolution who felt that he was the most dangerous because the most intelligent of their enemies. The success of the doctrines and of the champions of the Revolution enabled them from the first to monopolise the attention of the world; the opposition to it was identified with the

<sup>1</sup> Gaspard Valette, *Mallet du Pan et la Révolution Française*, 1893.



cause of the adherents of absolute monarchy, and the enlightened Royalists shared with them the discredit of failure. Carlyle only expressed the general feeling of his own time when he wrote to Mallet's son on the publication of the memoirs :—

“At an early period of my studies on the French Revolution, I found the Royalist side of that huge controversy to be an almost completely mad one, destined, on the whole, to die for ever; and thus, except where Royalists had historical facts to teach me, had, after a short time, rather to shun than seek acquaintance with them, finding in their speculative notions nothing but distress and weariness for me, and generally, instead of illumination in my researches, mere darkness visible. It was in this way that I had as good as missed Mallet du Pan, confounding him with the general *cohue*, from whom I now find he was widely and peculiarly distinguished, very much to his honour indeed. Of all writers on the Royalist side—indeed, I may say, on any side—Mallet seems to me to have taken incomparably the truest view of the enormous phenomena he was in the midst of.”

It is, however, only in recent years that historical criticism has awarded their true rank among the observers of the Revolution to the liberal or constitutional Royalists, and endorsed Carlyle's generous if somewhat naïve recognition of Mallet du Pan as the best exponent of the only true and fruitful Royalism of the revolutionary epoch. The earlier historians inevitably write as partisans of the great Revolution; they appeal to the feelings of a generation anxious, not so much to explore the deeper causes of the convulsion or to reason about its consequences, as to reconcile themselves to a *fait accompli*, to seek excuses

for much that had been dishonouring to the national character and to human nature itself, to exalt the triumph of the principles which, for good or evil, had transformed France and Europe. To men in this temper Mallet du Pan seemed the advocate, powerful, impassioned, perhaps bitter, of a lost cause; they were unable and unwilling to examine the grounds of his impeachment of their cherished ideals, and to distinguish what was controversial in it from what was of enduring historical value. But the seeming uselessness of his labours in life and the subsequent period of neglect were not to be followed by permanent oblivion. To provide materials for history was the object which Mallet du Pan as journalist-observer had ever in view. This was the ambition which sustained him in the defeat of his political hopes and efforts. He was favoured by the character of his genius and the greatness of the field for its exercise, and his object and his ambition have accordingly been crowned, in the opinion of the best authorities of a later age and wider outlook, by the fullest measure of success. Among the many who have recognised and proclaimed the significance of his attitude and the importance of his work three names stand out, those of Sainte-Beuve, Thureau-Dangin and Taine: the critic so deeply versed in the history and literature of France, the historian of parties under the Restoration, and the great thinker who studied the body politic in the spirit of the physiologist. The memory of Mallet du Pan owes everything to the appreciation of such writers as these;<sup>1</sup> but the thoroughness and insight of

<sup>1</sup> No better, no more complete or more discriminating account of Mallet's commentators is to be found than that contained in M. Gaspard Valette's monograph.

his own work are such that historians can do little but repeat his judgments on the causes which created and prolonged the convulsion, his analysis of the Jacobin dogma and its results, his criticism of the fatal ineptitude of the Royalist chiefs and their European allies. These judgments, this analysis, this criticism remain an integral part of the history of the time ; they have almost become its commonplaces.

A subsidiary but hardly less powerful cause of the oblivion in which the name of Mallet du Pan so long remained was the fugitive form in which his writings appeared. His most valuable work is contained in newspapers, of which probably not half a dozen files now exist ; in pamphlets, almost equally difficult to procure ; and in diplomatic reports, which, until the publication of the Vienna correspondence, remained buried in government archives. And although the substance of his work has now become known, the growth of Mallet's reputation in France has perhaps been hindered by the circumstance that though he wrote in French, and therefore appeals primarily to a French public, he was not a Frenchman, and was markedly wanting in sympathy with French ideas on government, religion and philosophy.

The Revolution ended by throwing him into a position of political antagonism to France, and its excesses betrayed him into expressing his opinion of the national character in harsh and unjust terms. National as well as merely political prejudice may therefore be accountable for the fact that while the periodical writings of Rivarol, of Camille Desmoulins, and others have been collected and published, nothing of the kind has been attempted in the case of Mallet du Pan. Yet nothing



would be easier than to put together from his scattered writings a volume which would form a most valuable historical commentary on the whole course of the Revolution.

To M. Taine of course is due in these later years a second revival of interest in the position and writings of Mallet du Pan. In his great work on the Revolution the historian quoted and extolled him as the "most competent, the most judicious, the most profound observer of the Revolution," and he followed this up by a remarkable preface to the Vienna correspondence (1884), in which he expressed his unbounded admiration for Mallet du Pan, an admiration born of sympathy no less with the writer's methods than with his opinions. Again he placed Mallet du Pan in the forefront. "Four observers," he wrote, "understood from the beginning the character and bearing of the French Revolution, Rivarol, Malouet, Gouverneur Morris and Mallet du Pan, the last named more profoundly than the rest." Taine's glowing and eloquent eulogies, though they have excited a good deal of passionate controversy, have apparently fixed the position of the publicist, and must form the basis of any account of his qualifications as a contemporary historian of the great events of which he was the witness.

He has often been described as a political philosopher, but his earliest commentator, Gentz, justly remarked that he had but little inclination towards profound or systematic philosophic study. The philosophic doctrines which enslaved his contemporaries and which had such momentous political results never obtained any serious hold on his mind. He belonged, as his biographer, Sayous, has pointed out, to the Genevese

school of "precise observation guided by moral sense". It was the positive side of political science which chiefly interested him; economics, and above all history in all its aspects, attracted him from the first; and his writings abound in historical sketches, allusions and parallels. He contemplated at one time an historical work on the causes which led to the French Revolution, and had collected materials for it which were lost when his property was seized in Paris; and a few years later Necker told him that he considered him marked out by his age and his talents to write a complete history of the whole memorable epoch. The rush of events, the want of leisure, and a premature death made any such task impossible; but the life-long habit of carefully verifying facts and of organising and sifting sources of intelligence gave a quite unusual value to his journalistic work, and was one of the secrets of his usefulness as a political adviser. He had all the gifts which might have made him a remarkable historian; they fitted him equally for the occupation which fell to his lot, that of describing and commenting on contemporary politics, '*l'histoire à la main*'.

Another marked advantage enjoyed by him in this capacity was the independence of his position and of his character. He was not a Frenchman—he was born a republican—it was not therefore by royalist sentiment that he was led to support the French Monarchy. A Genevese Protestant of Huguenot descent could not be influenced by religious passion in his defence of the Catholic clergy and the old ecclesiastical establishments of Europe. Official ties were not likely to hamper a journalist whose connection with the ministerial system of France had been

confined to transactions with the censors of the Paris press; and the obligations of party can hardly be said to have existed for one who was a centre of attack from all the extreme factions to which France and Europe were then a prey. His citizenship of a small neutral State, his knowledge of the principal countries of Europe, his open and liberal mind which had assimilated what was best in the prevailing political philosophy of the time, its cosmopolitan spirit, helped to make him a no less capable and impartial observer of the other European States than he was of France.

Nor was his judgment ever disturbed by the promptings of self-interest. Forced to rely on his own exertions for the support of his family, and for what appealed even more strongly to him, the freedom to speak his mind on questions of public interest, he was never tempted to compromise his own opinion for the sake of personal advantage. He was probably a unique example in an age of press corruption of a journalist who never accepted a pension or a gift, or yielded to intimidation. '*Louis XVI*,' he once proudly said, '*m'honora de sa confiance sans jamais m'honorer de ses bienfaits.*' We know at what a cost and with what splendid moral courage he vindicated his right to the title of Royalist during the first three years of the Revolution, and with what haughty independence the "Citizen of Geneva" spoke when necessary in later years to Ministers and Monarchs alike. He did not hesitate to alienate the sympathy and patronage of Louis XVIII. by the rough frankness with which, in response to the royal advances, he condemned the declaration of the Prince at his nominal accession to the throne, and earned Sainte-Beuve's designation of the '*paysan du Danube de l'émigration.*'



It would be impossible to find in his whole career an instance of a demand for a favour or for assistance save in his pathetic death-bed appeal to Wickham. His courageous independence was the quality most insisted on by his daughter in her account of his character, it was undoubtedly the great source of his moral power, and it was allied to other fine qualities, as well as to some defects, which are traceable to his Huguenot and Calvinist ancestry and to his citizenship of Geneva. His tenacity and combativeness in matters of opinion, his absorption in politics and his mastery of the whole armoury of political argument, his uncompromising adherence to standards of right and wrong in public and private life, are distinctively Genevese characteristics; as also are the want of pliancy, of geniality and of humour except of a rather sardonic kind, which no doubt diminished his influence in some of the circumstances of his life. It would, however, be a complete mistake to picture him as naturally of a gloomy or pessimistic disposition, or even as soured by political disappointments and private anxieties. His daughter's account reveals his enjoyment of congenial society and of his home life, and his letters show the footing of pleasant and affectionate intimacy on which he stood with a large circle of friends.

Qualities such as these, even combined as they were in his case with singular advantages of opportunity and training, are not in themselves sufficient to make a man's work live. Mallet du Pan has survived because he possessed a high degree of political capacity. In the concluding portion of the letter quoted above, Carlyle testified to the—

"rare sagacity with which Mallet judged the enormous phenomena he was in the midst of. Almost from the first he sees, if not across and through it, as I might say, yet steadily into the centre of it, and refuses to be bewildered, as others are, by what is of the superficies merely. This which, at fifty years' distance from the phenomena, were still a proof of some clearness of vision, amounted in Mallet's case to nearly the highest proof that can be given of that noble quality, and, we may say, of many other noble qualities which are indissolubly of kin to that. On the whole," he continues, "I have learned very much to respect your brave father from this book. A fine, robust, clear, and manful intellect was in him, all directed towards practical solidities, and none of it playing truant in the air; a quiet valour that defies all fortune—and he had some rather ugly fortune to defy—everywhere integrity, simplicity, and in that wild element of journalism, too, with its sad etceteras, the 'assurance of a man'. What still more attracts me to him, I feel that his excellences are not such as appeal to the vulgar, but only to the wiser; his style, for example, is not what is called poetic, but it is full of rough idiomatic vigour and conveys a true meaning to you, stamped coin; so of his conduct too, this is not drugged liquor, mock champagne, or other pleasant poisonous stuff, this is cool crystal water from the everlasting well: this will hurt nobody that drinks of it."

Taine insists again and again on his competence as a statesman, the competence which comes by nature; the imagination and tact which, combined with knowledge, go to make up the political faculty. His power of observation he compares to that of the physician; his work was a "monograph of the revolutionary fever," his analysis of public opinion was a "moral dissection". His judgments upon assemblies, parties

and groups, upon nobles, *émigrés* and clergy, "royalists in France and royalists in emigration, Parisians or provincials, administrators of the Constituent Assembly, proconsuls of the Convention, functionaries of the Directory, men of the Terror, of Thermidor, of Vendémiaire, Feuillants, Girondists and Jacobins," are described by Taine as exact and penetrating. "No one except Burke has so perfectly comprehended the Jacobins, their fanaticism, their sectarian instincts and methods, the logic of their dogmas, their ascendancy over the illiterate or half-educated, the might and maleficence of their dreams, their aptitude for destruction, their incapacity for construction, and their appeal to the passions of murder and dissolution."

Mallet's contemporary, Gentz, is hardly less emphatic on the point when he speaks of "the sane appreciation of the real value of political methods and systems, the firmness and certainty of judgment which distinguished in an instant truth from illusion, and measures which were practicable from those which were chimerical".

It was not indeed the lot of Mallet du Pan to show this competence as a minister or man of action. He showed it, however, as no other observer had the opportunity of doing, week by week and month by month, in his analyses and predictions throughout the course of the Revolution, "analyses," says Taine, "always exact, predictions almost always true". Sainte-Beuve makes the same comment. "In the difficult business of seizing upon and comprehending in a moment the stormy and complicated events which unfolded and crowded themselves upon him no one is more often right, pen in hand, than he;" and he



sums him up as an '*Esprit fort et sensé, très clairvoyant et très prévoyant*'.

Clearness of vision, then, Mallet du Pan possessed by the common consent of all his commentators in an eminent degree. But this rarest of political gifts would hardly have served his reputation with posterity if he had not also possessed the gift of style. With the exception of M. Taine, his French critics, if an English writer may venture to express an opinion, hardly do justice to the power of the weapon which gave him his immense renown with his contemporaries, which made him so useful to his friends and so dreaded by his opponents. Sainte-Beuve himself, while paying tribute to the strength and rugged energy of his writing, denies him grace, brilliancy, ease; and others are naturally struck by the want of correctness, of *tendue*, of polish, by the absence of conscious art, by the brusque homeliness of some of his phrases, the over-vehement expression of some of his rebukes. All this was the reflection of the writer's own nature, his combativeness, his absorption in his ideas, in the presentation of the truth as he saw it, his contempt for '*l'écrivainerie*' as a profession. In his case the style was indeed the man. Reflection, liberty and conviction gave the tone of manly reason, of strong intelligence, which appear in every line he wrote. The follies and crimes of the Revolution revolted his moral sense and stirred the fiery indignation with which he lashed them. Mallet's contemporaries, to whom his best writings were accessible and familiar, recognised these essential qualities of his style. De Pradt, no mean judge of polemical writing, classes him as one of the four great writers produced by the Revolution, the others being Madame

de Staël, Burke, and Rivarol (in his *Journal politique national*). Gentz speaks of the abundance and energy of his expression ; his satire and his eloquence. Eloquence, indeed, says Taine in one of his most brilliant pages, he had, if no other of the writer's gifts, eloquence which was the outcome of a belief in the justice of his cause, fortified by proofs which filled his mind and heart to overflowing. The reader is carried along by a '*courant intarissable de logique et de passion*,' by picturesque expressions, by striking images, by rapid generalisations, by arguments and proofs, "marshalled and launched like an assaulting column," by an oratorical compass "which Mirabeau never equalled and which Burke has not surpassed".<sup>1</sup>

With such a temperament and with the experience he had gained before the Revolution, Mallet du Pan may be said to have approached its consideration with an open mind, though moderation, in the sense of opportunism, played little part in his essentially strong and decided character. It is true that he had long formed his opinion on the philosophic ideas which were to inspire the Revolution ; that he had been deeply impressed by their disastrous effects in Geneva and Holland ; and that arbitrary and violent action of every kind were abhorrent to a mind which instinctively clung to order, morality and proportion in all social relations. It is easy to see, therefore, that the bias of his intellect would lead him to distrust the course which the Revolution would take. But no one who has followed the course of his opinions will

<sup>1</sup> I may refer to Madame Colladon's short characterisation of her father's style, see p. 331. I know of nothing better.

have failed to observe that he looked on the objects and opening stages of the Revolution with sympathy, and that it was no conservative or aristocratic prejudice but actual experience of men and measures which step by step forced him into pronounced opposition. For so indeed it happened as the progress of events disappointed the hopes and justified the fears with which he watched the opening scenes; until the growing contrast between pompous professions of the principles of liberty, legality and philanthropy, and the reality of oppression and intolerance; between extravagant promises of regeneration and the disorganisation and distress which were their only fruit, became the constant theme of his indignant censure. But what called forth Mallet du Pan's fullest talents as a writer was the crystallisation of the principles of the Revolution into a dogmatic political system, deduced from a fictitious social contract, and based on the omnipotence of the State, on the sacrifice of the individual, on the equalisation of fortunes and conditions and on the proscription of revealed religion. The Jacobins, said Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "played the whole game of religion and moral and domestic happiness into the hands of the aristocrats," and to describe opposition to their doctrines as reactionary and aristocratic is merely to adopt their favourite device for ensuring their own ascendancy. The opposition of Mallet du Pan at all events cannot be so easily dismissed. It is unnecessary to remind the reader of his opinion of the *ancien régime*, or of the blessings which constitutional freedom were capable of conferring upon a nation. He had continually in his mind, as his writings show, the condition, the welfare, the legitimate



aspirations of the body of the people. He had been bred a republican, and he believed in representative though not necessarily in republican government, he had given much attention to the sufferings of the poor in France and in Paris before the Revolution, and throughout its course he never ceased to study the temper and prejudices of the mass of the French population, and to base his recommendations to the leaders of the emigration on the knowledge derived from this study. Even in his appeals to the national spirit of Europe against Jacobin aggression he rested his hopes, as his son remarks, exclusively on the people, and he shows the meanest opinion of the privileged classes in the old States of the Continent. Taine indeed goes so far as to say of Mallet du Pan that "by principle, reflection and disposition, he was a Liberal". Not, indeed, in the sense in which the term "liberalism" is oftener used than in any other, namely, to signify the mere disposition to make concession to popular demands, but in a sense at least as full as that of his own fine definition. "Liberalism," says the historian, "means respect for others. Each person should be respected by the State and by his neighbours; the individual, like the community, should have his own domain, bounded, assured, fixed by law and custom. Whoever penetrates into the inviolable precinct which encloses his person, his property, his conscience, his beliefs, his opinions, his home, his private life and his domestic duties, is an intruder; if the State exists it is to prevent intrusion; if it itself intrudes it becomes the worst of offenders." The whole conception is the very antithesis of the equalitarian and anti-Christian socialism of the revolutionary movement, his opposition to

which accordingly drove Mallet du Pan, Republican and Protestant as he was, into ardent championship of a Royal house and a Roman clergy, and cost him in Paris all but his life and, with his expulsion from Switzerland, his native land. It was in the spirit described by Taine that he rejoiced to find in England a refuge which delivered him at least from the '*tourment du silence*'; '*un port où je puis accuser sans les craindre des tyrans en démente !*' It was this temper which he brought to the great work of his life; the ten years' analysis of the revolutionary fever, the dissection of the spirit of Jacobinism, which to this day retains all its truth, its far-seeing sagacity, its moral significance.

Mallet's "liberalism," to use a term with too many nineteenth century associations to be altogether satisfactory, was shown at least as strongly in his attitude towards the action of the Royalist party (to which Taine makes no allusion), as in his opposition to the Jacobins. The part he played in the councils of the emigration is the most important feature of the later years of his life and, together with his attitude on the question of the war, must be specially noticed in any account of his opinions. On the latter point Mallet du Pan has been fiercely attacked by the revolutionary writers. He is charged with having counselled and fomented the war, and his position as an adviser "in the pay" of the allied courts has laid him open to misrepresentation of a kind which earlier chapters<sup>1</sup> dealing with his attitude on all the phases of the struggle will have shown to be not only unfounded but dishonest. It would be far more accurate to say that he stood almost alone in denounc-

<sup>1</sup> See especially pp. 243-248.

ing the disastrous folly of the war as carried on by the allies, than to picture him as hounding them on to destroy the principles of the Revolution. Very different was the policy of the author of the phrase '*Jamais des canons ne tuèrent des sentiments*'. He was never tired of preaching that a wise conservatism would appeal to the passive but order-loving masses of the French people by offering them, as Bonaparte finally did, a practical alternative to the savage anarchy of Jacobin rule which subsisted only on the dread, fostered alike by revolutionary and counter-revolutionary bigots, of a return to the *ancien régime*. But he early realised the extraordinary nature of the struggle against a power which had solemnly proclaimed its intention to overturn existing constitutions and to carry the principles of systematised anarchy through the length and breadth of Europe. He clearly perceived the extent of the danger which threatened the allies, owing largely to their own selfish weakness and blind violence ; and he anxiously laboured to bring about such a combination of public spirit and well-directed effort among Continental States against the French Republic as that which was afterwards called into being by Napoleon's dream of universal empire. It would be useless to deny that as the character of the war changed in the sense indicated, and as Mallet was forced to witness the destruction of the smaller States whose liberty and independence was so dear to his heart, his attitude became one of increasingly implacable hostility to the Revolution and all its works. Some colour is therefore given to the accusations which have been brought against him. It is certain, however, that such criticism, in so far as



it did not come from avowed partisans of revolutionary methods, proceeded largely from the attitude of mind, a mixture of lassitude and want of perception, which characterised some of Mallet's constitutionalist friends in England and which later inspired the temporising and ill-informed policy of Grey and a small body of Parliamentary Whigs during the life and death struggle with Napoleon. Mallet du Pan indeed had little more toleration than Burke for the "moderation which made excuses for error and abjured its own cause in order to conciliate opponents".

A more serious criticism than that which attacks Mallet du Pan's moderation on the question of the war is that which challenges his foresight. Political foresight is a higher gift than the guesswork which so often goes by that name. Yet a just appreciation of the possibilities of the future is a quality to which posterity at any rate attaches great importance, and Sainte-Beuve observed that Mallet in his previsions was "as rarely as possible in such a *mêlée* wrong". With Burke, with Morris,<sup>1</sup> with Catherine of Russia ('*Oh, César viendra, n'en doutez pas*'), with all competent observers, he early saw that the Revolution would run its course through anarchy to despotism; it would not be difficult to show from his writings that he foretold every form which it would take, including, as Sainte-Beuve remarks, the Monarchy of July;<sup>2</sup> and the restoration with which it

<sup>1</sup> "An American nourished in the bosom of liberty cannot but be deeply affected to see that in almost any event the struggle must terminate in despotism" (Gouverneur Morris, August 1792).

<sup>2</sup> The name of the Duc d'Orléans, afterwards Louis Philippe, recurs several times in Mallet's Correspondence. As early as 1796 he had observed the excellent qualities of the young prince and the

closed was an almost literal fulfilment of his hopes and predictions for France.

The biographer of Rivarol, indeed, while placing Mallet du Pan in the front rank of political philosophers, has described him as inferior to the subject of his memoir in practical sagacity, in the prognostication of coming events. Rivarol, he says, saw that the Revolution, begun by excess of liberty, would end in excess of tyranny. But generalisations of this kind, and advice such as that Rivarol gave in 1792 to Louis XVI., '*s'il veut régner il est temps qu'il fasse le roi,*' are not practical politics. Mallet's writings abound in similar remarks given in even more vigorous if less classical language, but he did not, like Rivarol, confine himself to making phrases and delighting society with his epigrams. Mallet du Pan and Joseph de Maistre, again observes M. de Lescure, both believed that the Revolution would end in a restoration—a restoration, according to the Savoyard prophet, to be in some way an open manifestation of the will of God; according "to the Genevese philosopher, the fruit of a war without selfish ambition or too crushing defeats, the disinterested triumph of a European police coinciding with a reaction of disillusion and repentance of a whole people".

Both Mallet du Pan and De Maistre were undoubtedly right, as the event proved, in the belief they

number of his partisans, and had speculated on the possibility of his proving acceptable to the mass of Frenchmen alienated by the blunders and prejudices of the elder branch. In 1800 he writes of the immense impression made by the Prince in London on English and French alike. "Il est difficile d'avoir l'esprit plus juste, plus formé, plus éclairé, de mieux parler, de montrer plus de sens, de connaissances, une politesse plus attirante et plus simple. Oh, celui-là a su mettre à profit l'adversité."

are thus taunted with holding ; though the latter words are a parody of the views of one who as early as 1795 prophesied, as Mallet did, that the monarchy would only reappear on the wreck of a military dictatorship. M. Descostes, an admirer rather than a critic of Mallet du Pan, points to a passage in De Maistre's *Considérations sur la France*, in which that writer of genius foreshadows the restoration of Louis XVIII. as a providential saviour who, once on the throne, would tear up his old programme and think only of pardon, reconciliation and healing ; and he asks how Mallet, with merely human powers of observation, could have been expected to divine, in the exile of Verona, the King of the Charter of 1814. The question embodies a criticism not uncommon in the comparison of the two writers, and one which, while indicating the distinction between them, hardly does justice to Mallet du Pan. He, indeed, was not consoled or misled by any belief in the divine right of kings, in a monarch who was to execute the designs of God for the punishment and protection of France. He merely strove with the pertinacity which belonged to him for the establishment of a form of government which was well within the region of possibility, if not in July 1789 at all events in 1795, and which was to take place in 1814 in far less favourable circumstances, not as De Maistre prophesied "without effort and as if by enchantment," but imposed by the victorious armies of Europe upon an exhausted nation.

The whole controversy, however, is a somewhat barren one. Keen fighter as Mallet was, he was often premature in his anticipations thrown out in the heat of the conflict, but his real crime in the eyes of



his French critics is that he refused to be beguiled by the success and glory of the French arms into losing sight of the principles upon which free and settled government could alone be established in France. His business, as he conceived it, was to study the facts of the political situation, to observe events and tendencies, and to form his opinion and give his advice accordingly. It was not, as might be imagined from the tone of some eulogies and criticisms, to sit in his armchair and make prophecies. His reputation must rest on the general truth and penetration of his analysis, and not on the literal exactness or the reverse of some of his incidental predictions. He made no claim to be considered a "political philosopher," nor did he often venture on dogmatic prediction. Even on the question with which his hopes were bound up, the possibility of the application of the principles of constitutional freedom to a country of whose people he said, not long before his death, that "liberty was ever unintelligible to them," he wrote with the diffidence born of insight and knowledge. He spoke for instance of the "skill and good fortune which would be required to harmonise ancient prejudices with modern, interests which preceded with those which had followed the Revolution; a fragile but desirable alliance against which the memories of absolute monarchy on the one hand, and revolutionary independence on the other, will wage unending war". These words exactly describe the struggles which followed the establishment of constitutional Monarchy in France. Their author, had he survived, would certainly have found a congenial task in supporting the genuine attempt to reconcile old and new, to bridge over the gulf dug between classes by the

Revolution, which was made during that most brilliant period of Parliamentary effort and oratory ; he would have fought side by side with de Serre, de Villèle, de Montignac, and Royer-Collard. But it may be doubted whether he would have felt any great confidence in the success of the experiment. It is difficult to believe that the result would not have been different if the attempt could have been made before prejudice and distrust had taken so deep a root, before the nation had become "gangrened with Revolution and with Cæsarism," if the Royalism of 1795 had been such as Mallet had counselled, if the Declaration of Verona had been inspired by the spirit of the Charter of 1814, if Louis XVIII. and the authorised chiefs of the Emigration had learnt their lesson twenty years sooner than they did.

Criticism of Mallet du Pan, then, to be effective must involve condemnation of his whole attitude towards the Revolution, and it may be admitted that to appreciate justly the point of view of an opponent however enlightened of the revolutionary movement is not altogether easy for a modern writer. He lives in a world transformed, as he necessarily feels for good, by the great convulsion of a century ago, a world which has assimilated something that was possible out of an impossible programme, and which has gained equality of civil and political rights while rejecting social equality ; a world which, while it has not attained the revolutionary ideal described by Mallet du Pan as "unchangeable perfection, universal brotherhood, ability to acquire everything that is wanting to compose man's life entirely of enjoyment and possession," has implanted an aspiration for equal social opportunity which must have tremendous consequences

for the future of European civilisation. Influenced consciously or unconsciously by some such perception as this, the man of to-day feels that those who persisted in opposing the Revolution, that "mighty current in human affairs," were rather "perverse and obstinate" than "resolute and firm". He finds it less difficult to sympathise with the humanity of a Rousseau or even with the mysticism of a De Maistre than with the reason and commonsense of Mallet du Pan, inspired though he was with the fire and eloquence of intense conviction. Yet the latter is really much more modern in his practical political ideas, in his modes of thought and even of expression, than the extremists on either side. It is hardly to be doubted that men as sagacious and as well versed in history and politics as Mallet du Pan and Malouet, if placed in similar circumstances to-day, would act as they did. The opposition, indeed, of enlightened and disinterested men to the anti-liberal and anti-social developments of the Revolution was perhaps inevitably unsuccessful, but it does not require apology. It is legitimate to regret that the teachings of Montesquieu rather than the dreams of Rousseau did not inspire the leaders of the revolutionary movement and to desire that the advantages of the Revolution should have been gained without its violence and horrors; for France might then have remained socially and politically united and Europe might have profited by her example without being devastated of her arms. Such at all events was the ideal for which Mallet du Pan constantly strove, an ideal which may be expected to appeal with special force to Englishmen of whose national character and institutions he was the lifelong student and admirer. For the England from which



he drew his inspiration knew how to reconcile constant progress in popular methods of government with the maintenance of constitutional forms and the authority which goes with them ; and the words in which Burke summed up the political genius of his countrymen—"the only liberty I mean is the liberty connected with order"—give the keynote of the opinions of Mallet du Pan and find an echo in every page of his writings.

## APPENDIX.

[Part of an article in the *Mercure Britannique* (No. 13, 21st February 1799), entitled "Du degré d'influence qu'a eu la philosophie Française sur la Révolution".]

Parmi les questions oiseuses qui occupent les cercles, on a souvent agité celle de savoir lequel de ces deux écrivains avait le plus contribué à dépraver la raison des Français, et à les diriger vers la Révolution.

Un de mes plus respectables compatriotes, dont l'autorité déciderait seule mon opinion, *M. De Luc*, n'hésite pas à prononcer contre *Rousseau*: depuis longtemps je partage ce sentiment.

Sans me permettre un épisode pour le justifier, j'observerai que *Voltaire*, plus goguenard que raisonneur, plus satirique que véhément, repoussait par son cynisme, et refroidissait par son rabâchage. Parlant à l'esprit plus qu'au sentiment et à l'imagination, trop superficiel pour les hommes instruits, trop scandaleux pour les hommes un peu scrupuleux, toujours prohibé, vendu clandestinement, et peu lu des classes intermédiaires et populaires, il vit son influence circonscrite dans ce qu'on nommait la *bonne compagnie*, and dans quelques corps littéraires. Il avait compté sur l'empire du ridicule et de l'esprit pour conquérir la vanité, les prétentions, et l'immoralité. Ses enthousiastes étaient un *Comte d'Argental*, un *Thibouville*, un *Vilette*, un *d'Argence*; il n'y a pas jusqu'à *Madame Dubarri* dont il n'eût ambitionné et espéré la conversion. Il attachait peu d'importance aux suffrages plébéiens, et ne se flatta jamais d'obtenir celui des hommes de mœurs sages et sévères. Dans le nombre des incrédules qu'il a formés, on pourrait compter presque autant de personnes corrompues, ou d'une réputation morale entachée.

*Rousseau*, au contraire, a égaré l'honnêteté même : jusqu'à ses doutes persuadaient ses lecteurs de sa sincérité ; en écrivant avec gravité, il fixait l'attention ; en écrivant avec éloquence, il entraînait la raison et la sensibilité. Il a eu cent fois plus de lecteurs que *Voltaire* dans les conditions mitoyennes et inférieures de la société. Enfin, *Rousseau* a imprimé la secousse décisive à l'opinion, par ses principes de droit politique. Son indépendance ombrageuse, la misère et le vagabondage dans lesquels il avait passé sa jeunesse, son aversion pour toute espèce de supériorité civile, dictèrent toutes ses théories. Il a ressuscité des *Levellers* et des Anabaptistes le dogme de l'égalité ; sa haine pour la distinction des rangs perce dans chacun de ses ouvrages. Personne n'a plus ouvertement attaqué le droit de propriété en le déclarant une usurpation. Il détestait la Monarchie ; il voyait la tyrannie jusques dans les Républiques constituées sur des balances de pouvoir ; il s'est élevé contre les Gouvernemens mixtes, avec autant d'aigreur qu'il attaquait les Gouvernemens absolus. C'est lui seul qui a inoculé chez les Français la doctrine de la souveraineté du Peuple, et de ses conséquences les plus extrêmes. J'ai entendu, en 1788, *Marat* lire et commenter le *Contrat social* dans les promenades publiques, aux applaudissemens d'un auditoire enthousiaste. J'aurais peine à citer un seul Révolutionnaire qui ne fût transporté de ces théorèmes anarchiques, et qui ne brûlât du désir de les réaliser. Ce *Contrat social* qui dissout la société, fut le *Coran* des discoureurs apprêtés de 1789, des Jacobins de 1790, des Républicains de 1791 et des forcenés les plus atroces. Les dissertations de *Babeuf* sont autant d'analyses de *Rousseau* et d'applications de sa doctrine. Le seul publiciste d'une grande et légitime renommée que posséda la France, *Montesquieu* fut éclipsé par l'étoile de *Rousseau*, dont les disciples discréditèrent *l'Esprit des Lois*, pour faire triompher les funestes billevesées du *Contrat social*.

Par une singularité frappante, il est donc arrivé que le plus isolé des écrivains, qu'un malheureux Étranger dans la retraite, sans partis, sans connexions de son vivant, ayant pour ennemis la pluralité des *Philosophes* de Paris, est devenu le prophète de la France Révolutionnaire ; cette remarque le dispense du moins d'avoir conjuré avec personne le bouleversement dont l'Europe est la victime, et de l'avoir préparé intentionnellement.



*Voltaire*, au contraire, prémédita, poursuivit, et gouverna avec méthode, le projet de subvertir le Christianisme. Il forma dans les lettrés cet esprit de secte et d'enrôlement, qui rendit les philosophes puissance organisée, qui leur rallia la jeunesse, et qui concourut à enfanter les rassemblemens, convertis, depuis, en arsenaux révolutionnaires.

Mais, nous le répétons ; nul concert antérieur de doctrine ou de mesures, nulle intelligence commune, nul vœu uniforme dans la généralité des gens de lettres flétris du sobriquet de philosophe, ne précédèrent ce monstrueux assemblage d'événements imprévus et au-dessus de toute prévoyance, qui ont plongé la France dans la barbarie.

*Mably*, dont les déclamations républicaines ont enivré beaucoup de modernes démocrates, *Mably* frondeur brutal et excessif, était religieux jusqu'à l'austérité ; au premier coup de tocsin contre l'Église Romaine, il eût jeté ses livres au feu, excepté ses sanglantes apostrophes à *Voltaire* et aux Athées.

*Marmontel*, *Saint-Lambert*, *Morellet*, encyclopédistes, ont été les adversaires de la Révolution. L'Abbé *Raynal* accourut de Marseille, exposant son repos et sa vie, pour en montrer la turpitude et le délire à ses fondateurs tout-puissants. Tel qui, six mois auparavant, citait avec transport une de ses tirades aux bandits du Palais Royal, opina à le suspendre à la lanterne.

*Diderot* et *Condorcet*, voilà les véritables Chefs de l'école révolutionnaire. Le premier avait saisi dans toute sa plénitude le système d'énormités qui a fait le destin de la France : *Diderot* eut proclamé l'égalité avant *Marat*, les droits de l'homme avant *Sieyès*, la sainte insurrection avant *Mirabeau* et *La Fayette*, le massacre des Prêtres avant les Septembristes. Il fut l'auteur de la plupart de ces diatribes incendiaires, intercallées dans *l'Histoire Philosophique des deux Indes*, qui déshonorent cet ouvrage, et que *Raynal*, sur la fin de ses jours, avait proscrit avec horreur d'une nouvelle édition qu'il préparait.<sup>1</sup> Qui a entendu *Diderot*

<sup>1</sup>Ces morceaux postiches sont faciles à distinguer par le style, et par leur virulence. J'en ai vu l'état et le prix entre les mains de M. D., ancien Receveur des Finances, qui conclut le marché entre *Raynal* et *Diderot*. Ce dernier reçut de son confrère 10 mille livres tournois pour ces amplifications convulsives, qui sont une préface du code révolutionnaire.

converser sur les Gouvernements, sur la Religion et sur l'Église, n'a rien eu à apprendre de la Révolution. Lorsque les économistes vinrent à leur tour gouverner l'État avec leurs logogripes, leur *impôt unique*, leur despotisme légal, etc., *Diderot*, se moquant de leurs réformes, les comparait à *des médecins qui travaillaient sur un cadavre*. Ce cadavre était la Monarchie Française.

Tous les lettrés frénétiques qui, la plume à la main, ont depuis 1788 poussé le char sanglant de l'anarchie et de l'athéisme, *Chamfort*, *Grouvelle*, *Garat*, *Cerutti*, et cent autres plus obscurs, furent engendrés par *Diderot*, perfectionnés par *Condorcet*. Ils décrièrent et diffamèrent les savants plus modérés qui, épris des nouveautés avant 1789, reculèrent d'effroi devant les premiers crimes des Novateurs. C'est donc une méprise d'attribuer à l'universalité des *Philosophes*, l'universalité des complots, des maximes et des forfaits qui ont envahi la France depuis dix ans.

Mais le reproche dont on ne saurait les laver, c'est d'avoir accéléré la dégénération et la dépravation Françaises, en affaiblissant les appuis de la morale, en rendant la conscience raisonneuse, en substituant à des devoirs observés par sentiment, par tradition, et par habitude, les règles incertaines de la raison humaine et des sophismes à l'usage des passions ; c'est d'avoir rendu problématiques toutes les vérités, et introduit ce scepticisme présomptueux, qui conduit à de pires égarements que l'ignorance ; c'est d'avoir ébranlé tout ce que le temps, l'expérience, et la saine philosophie avaient consacré, et préparé ainsi l'anarchie publique par l'anarchie de l'esprit.

Leur légèreté y concourut avec leur amour-propre. *Spinoza*, *Hobbes*, *Vanini*, *Bayle*, *Collins*, ensevelis dans l'étude et métaphysiciens abstraits, ne cherchaient à être lus et n'étaient lus que des savants. Quelque dangereuses que fussent leurs opinions, elles ne s'échappaient point au-delà d'un cercle très limité. Mais les dogmatiseurs Parisiens prêchèrent au public, dispensèrent leurs lecteurs des connaissances, les séduisirent par les agréments de l'élocution. Répandus dans la société, ils la pénétrèrent de leur doctrine ; renoncèrent aux gros livres qu'on ne lit point, et démontrèrent l'athéisme dans des romans, l'imposture de la révolution dans des quolibets, la vanité de la morale dans des historiettes, et l'art social dans des proverbes. Avec des abstractions, des preuves, et des recherches, ils eussent ennuyé le beau monde ; ils le con-

quirent en lui apprenant qu'on pouvait douter de tout sans rien savoir, et savoir tout sans rien étudier.

Comme depuis trente ans, aux prétentions de la naissance, de la fortune et du crédit, il était devenu indispensable à Paris d'ajouter celle d'homme d'esprit, pour en obtenir le titre on en caressait les distributeurs. De peur de passer pour un sot, on prit la livrée de la liberté et de l'incrédulité. Un courtisan, un colonel, un conseiller, ou une comédienne, honorés une fois d'un brevet de *philosophie* dans quelque lettre privée de *d'Alembert* et de *Voltaire*, ou dans le Journal de Paris, se jugeaient immortels.

C'est ainsi que Paris se couvrit de *Philosophes*. Depuis le marmouset imberbe qui bégayait des blasphèmes dans les bureaux d'esprit, jusqu'au Marquis de *Vilette* et au portier des académies, la Confrérie s'aggrégea toutes les espèces. Jamais un délire plus impertinent ne déshonora une nation. Il y avait loin de cette prostitution Parisienne aux écoles de Pythagore et du Portique. Qu'auraient dit *Platon*, *Épictète*, *Aristote*, *Montaigne*, *Leibnitz*, *Newton*, et *Locke*, de cette mascarade introduite dans le sanctuaire de la science et de la raison ?

La frivolité de Paris fut donc le puissant auxiliaire de la frivolité *philosophique*. Dans nul autre pays, les écrits les plus audacieux n'eussent entraîné une crédulité si générale et si enthousiaste : dans nul autre pays, une secte effrénée n'eût été aussi favorisée par l'irréflexion et l'exaltation naturelles des esprits.

En général, lorsque dans les Gouvernements absolus l'opinion a relâché ses chaînes, elle ne tarde pas à les briser, et parcourt les extrêmes en un clin d'œil ; par la même cause qui multiplie les athées dans les contrées livrées aux superstitions.

Qu'une Convention Nationale eût été érigée à Londres, à Madrid, ou à Vienne, dans des circonstances analogues à celle où se trouvait la France en 1789, aurait-elle offert ce spectacle de fous échappés des Petites-maisons, proclamant leurs lumières comme la loi du genre humain, et d'une magnifique hiérarchie sociale, se reportant subitement aux éléments de l'état sauvage ? Ici se retrouve le génie immodéré, impétueux et confiant de la nation, imprimant à la Révolution le caractère le plus excessif. Les Français s'étaient rassemblés pour régler ou pour limiter la Monarchie ; ils en ont fait une Démocratie royale,



ensuite une République anarchique. Trop de fonctions exclusives étaient l'appanage de la Noblesse : ils ont réservé les emplois à des savetiers, des copistes, des clercs de procureurs, des avocats de province, des moines défroqués, des marchands, des juges de paroisse, des faiseurs de romans, des compilateurs de gazettes. Quelques privilèges de cette même Noblesse étaient abusifs ; ils l'ont dégradée et dépouillée de ses propriétés : ils se plaignaient des richesses du Clergé, et n'ont souffert aucun milieu entre son opulence et sa ruine, entre son éclat et sa proscription. Des préjugés excommuniaient les comédiens ; ils en ont fait des législateurs. Les *Philosophes* avaient réclamé la tolérance religieuse ; leurs commentateurs ont renversé toutes les religions. On ferait un volume de ce parallèle. J'ose le terminer par une prédiction ; c'est que la même fougue ramènera un jour les Français, s'ils redeviennent maîtres de leur sort, à l'exagération la plus opposée.

Mais le caractère le plus spécial que la perversité *philosophique* ait communiqué à la Révolution est celui-ci. Presque tous les siècles avaient vu de grands crimes, mais nul encore la théorie des crimes publics et privés, érigés en système d'État et en droit public universel, par des *Législateurs* parlant au nom de la *raison* et de la *nature*. Ce nouveau genre d'hypocrisie ou de fanatisme était encore inconnu. Il fallait l'alliance des doctrines du temps avec les mœurs de ses professeurs, pour produire ce tableau d'un Peuple régénéré par l'athéisme, par l'assassinat, par l'incendie, le brigandage, et le sacrilège ; ce tableau d'un Peuple dont les Représentans et les Chefs successifs ne commettent point le crime dans la fureur, mais le discutent didactiquement, le motivent, le délibèrent, en étudient les moyens avec recherche, le préconisent avec éloquence, s'applaudissent à l'approche de ses succès, le prononcent avec solennité, l'exécutent de sang-froid, et répondent par des éclats de rire aux lamentations de leurs victimes.

## INDEX.

### A.

Addington, 326.  
 Administrative Chaos under Directory, 230-1, 310.  
 Admiration for England, 67, 287, 290-1.  
 Agricultural Population of France, 227.  
 American Colonies, 30, 34, 50.  
 Anglomania in France, 73.  
*Annales Politiques*, etc., 17-20.  
 Archduke Charles, The, 163, 169, 249, 311.  
 Aristocracy, Genevese, 4, 10, 11.  
 Assignats, 112, 231-6.  
 Aubonne, 12.  
 Augereau, 263.

### B.

Babœuf, 229.  
 Balance of Power, 31.  
 Bâle, Peace of, 192-3.  
 Barnave, 103, 125 (note).  
 Barras, 190, 201, 224, 262, 311.  
 Barthélemy, 208, 260-1 (note).  
 Bastille, 10, 100.  
 Bel-Homme, Prison, 275.  
 Berlin Correspondence, 186.  
 Berne, 172, 203-4, 268. Diplomatic centre, 207-11. Family life and society at, 205-7.  
 Bonaparte Napoleon, 27, 110, 179, 201, 256 (and note), 258, 262 (note), 263-7, 269 (note), 278-9, 314-9, 333, 349.  
 Bonstetten, 269, 279.  
 Bourgeoisie, Lettre de, 2.  
 Breteuil, Baron de, 135, 150, 163.  
 Brissot, 55, 72, 85, 122, 133, 163.  
 British Constitution, eulogised, 86, 87, 88, 116. Prejudice against in France, 88.  
 Brumaire 18th, 1799 (Nov. 10), Bonaparte's Coup d'État, 315, 319.  
 Brunswick, Duke of, 149, 150, 220-1, 270, 283. Failure of his Campaign, 154 (and note).

Brunswick Manifesto, The, 150, 152, 153 (note), 239.  
 Brussels in 1793, 162-3.  
 Burke, Edmund, 39, 48, 126, 130 (note), 184, 231, 241, 242, 244, 285 (note), 286, 345, 350, 356.

### C.

Calonne, 79, 150, 301 (note).  
 Calvin, 2, 5. His Consistory, 7.  
 Camden, Lord, 48.  
 Campo Formio, Treaty of, 270.  
 Canning, 286 (note), 294.  
 Carletti, Comte, 194 (note).  
 Carlyle, Thomas. His letter about Mallet du Pan, 335, 342.  
 Carnot, 184, 224.  
 Cassel, 12.  
 Castries, Marshal de, 147, 162, 198, 205, 219, 220, 249, 257, 308.  
 Catherine II., 143, 171, 177, 178, 350.  
 Cavendish, Lord John, 48.  
 Cazalès, 103, 109.  
 Céligny, 5.  
 Censorship, 64, 65, 74. Abolished, 86.  
 Chateaubriand, 91, 301 (note).  
 Chatham's Policy, 36.  
 Charter of 1814, 352, 354.  
 Chesterfield, Lord, 20.  
 Citizenship of Geneva, 2, 6, 341.  
 Clapham, Mr. J. H., 151 (note).  
 Clavière, 9.  
 Clergy, French, 116, 117.  
 Clermont-Tonnerre, Comte de, 102.  
 Cobden, 31.  
 Coblenz, 130, 142, 147, 160.  
 Coburg, Prince of, 162, 170. Failure of his Campaign, 170-1.  
 Coleridge, S. T., 346.  
 Colladon, Madame, 121, 329-30.  
 Collaredo, 172, 241.  
 Collot d'Herbois, 179.  
 Comité des Recherches, 117, 120.  
 Commercial Monopoly, 32, 33.  
 — Treaty with France, 68.

Committee of Public Safety, 176-9.  
 Condorcet, 23, 26, 127, 359 (Appendix).  
*Considerations, The*, 164-9. Effect of,  
 and fury of *émigrés*, 168-9. Pitt's  
 opinion of, 164. Burke's opinion of,  
 169.

Constitution of 1791, 125-6, 191, 224.

— of 1795, 224-5, 229, 259.

Constitutional Monarchy, chance for,  
 in 1795, 191, 201, 202. Establishment  
 of, in 1814, 351-2, 353-4.

Constitutional Reform, 1789, 92-3. Party  
 of, 94-5.

Consulate, *The*, 317-8.

Convention, *The*, 176. Finance of,  
 176-7.

Conway, 48.

*Correspondance Politique pour servir*,  
 etc., Pamphlet, 250-3.

Crimes of the Revolution, 106, 118-9.

## D.

D'Alembert, 23, 26, 361 (Appendix).

Danton, 110, 111, 127, 134, 142, 155,  
 180.

D'Artois, Comte, 91, 174, 196, 199,  
 219 (note), 282, 285, 303, 308-9.

Dauphin (Louis XVII.), death of the,  
 193-4.

Debates of Assembly, Mallet's Reports,  
 90-1, 118.

De la Rive, 301.

De Lisle, Abbé, 273, 305 (and note),  
 306.

Delolme's British Constitution, 86.

D'Entraigues, 173 (note), 198.

Depopulation of France, 236-7.

D'Érlach, Baron, 159, 160, 268 (note).

Descostes, M. François, 186 (note), 209,  
 352.

Desmoulins, Camille, 122, 337.

D'Hénin, Princesse, 215, 255, 269.

D'Holbach's *Système de la Nature*, 24,  
 62.

Diderot, 26, 62, 359 (Appendix).

Diplomatic Reports by Mallet du Pan,  
 162, 172, 175, 185-7.

Directors, *The*, described, 223, 254.

D'Ivernois, Sir Francis, 9.

Domiciliary visits, 115, 120.

D'Orléans, Duc (Egalité), death of, 181  
 (note).

— — (Louis Philippe), 350-1 (note).

*Doutes sur l'éloquence*, 14.

Du Barry, Chevalier, execution of, 181  
 (note).

Dumolard, 267.

Dumont, 9, 299, 301.

Du Pan, Mdlle. (mother of Mallet du  
 Pan), 4.

— Étienne and family, 4 (note).

— Syndic, 4.

Duport, 103, 124, 137.

## E.

*Économistes*, 17, 33, 68.

Elgin, Lord, British Minister at  
 Brussels, 163, 169, 172, 175.

Emigration, *The*, 90, 130-2, 146, 242,  
 243.

*Émigrés* in London, 255, 292, 301, 304.

England and France, 33-40.

— in 1781, 29. In 1797, 287.

English manners, 294.

— Party System, 43, 44, 45, 47, 50,  
 67.

*Esprit des Lois*, 7, 14.

## F.

Faction in England, 29 (note). (See  
 English Party System.)

Ferney, 8, 16.

Fersen, Comte de, 150.

Fitzgerald, Lord Robert, 210, 212.

FitzPatrick, Mr. Walter, and Dropmore  
 Papers, 199 (note).

Fourbonnais, de, *Traité de Finances*, 68.

Fox, C. J., 48, 67, 175.

France and England, 33-40.

Frankfort, Mission of Mallet du Pan to,  
 145-155, 247. Coronation of Francis  
 II. at, 148.

Franklin, 265 (note).

Fraternalisation, Decree of, 170, 239-240.

Fraubrunnen, Battle of, 279.

Frederick the Great, 66, 265.

French Revolution, influence of, on  
 England, 39.

Friburg, 272.

Fructidor, 1795, Decrees of, 189, 200.  
 18th 1797, Directorial Coup d'État,  
 257-63.

## G.

Gallatin, 207, 221, 288.

Geneva, in eighteenth century, 6-8.

Constitution of, 3, 10. College of, 5.

Revolutionary troubles in, 9, 10,  
 52-5. Revolution of 1794, and Pro-

scription of Mallet du Pan, 273. An-

nexion of, to France, 1798, Mallet  
 excluded from French citizenship,  
 280.

Genevese, Character of, 6, 52, 341.



Gentz, 91, 118 (note), 241, 333 (note), 338, 342, 345.  
 George III., 42, 210, 211.  
 Georgel, Abbé, 273.  
 Gibraltar, Defence of, 36.  
 Girondists, 133, 239.  
 Gladstone, Mr., 302 (note).  
 Grave, Chevalier de, 292.  
 Great Britain, 29, 35, 36, 67. War Policy, 213, 284. As an ally, 129 (note), 285. Public Spirit of (1798), 287-9 (Letter to Gallatin).  
 Grenville, Lord, 172, 175, 210, 294, 325.  
 Grey, Lord, and Whigs in Napoleonic War, 350.  
 Grimm, 73.  
 Grotius, 65 (note).  
 Gustavus III., 143.

## H.

Haller, Ch., 268, 300.  
 Hardenberg, Baron, 186.  
 Hastings, Warren, 69-72.  
 Hoche, General, 262.  
 Holderness, Lady, 321.  
 Holland, 33, 41, 75.  
 Huguenot and Calvinist ancestry of Mallet du Pan, 2, 341.

## I.

Incendiary teachings in Geneva and Holland, 43.  
 Indian Empire of Great Britain, 37.

## J.

Jacobins, The, 163, 177, 346, 348.  
*Jeunesse dorée*, 198.  
 Joseph II., 16, 20.  
*Journal de Bruxelles*, 15, 58.  
 — *de Genève*, 58, 59.  
 — *Politique*. See *Mercure de France*.  
 Journalism, French, in eighteenth century, 56, 57; in Paris, 78, 85, 189, 259; Mallet du Pan's ideal of, 18, 19, 89, 105 (note).

## K.

Kaunitz, 135.

## L.

Lafayette, 126, 210.  
 La Harpe, 15, 16, 59.  
 Lally-Tollendal, Comte de, 88, 92, 94, 102, 214-5, 324, 325, 329.

La Marck, Comte de, 112, 114.  
 Lameth, Charles de, 103, 220.  
 — Alexandre de, 125.  
 — Théodore de, 208, 210.  
 Langres, Bishop, Duke of, 92, 93, 94.  
 Lansdowne, Lord, 175. (See also Shelburne.)  
*La Pucelle*, 8.  
 La Réveillère-Lepaux, 223 (and note).  
 Lausanne, 8, 18, 159.  
 Legislative Assembly, 124.  
 Leopold II., 128, 133, 143.  
 Lescure, M. de, 351.  
*Les Délices*, 8.  
 Le Tourneur, 224.  
*Lettre à un Ministre d'État*, Pamphlet, 254.  
 Liberalism, Taine's definition of, 348.  
 Lille, Lord Malmesbury's mission to, 286 (and note).  
 Linguet, 14, 15, 16, 17, 55, 276-7.  
 Liverpool, Lord, 281, 292-3.  
 Loquacity in America, 44.  
 Louis XVI., 34, 79, 81, 94, 104, 126-7, 134-8, 145, 147, 151, 161, 340. Mallet's loyalty to, 127, 138, 174. Autograph note from, 148-9 (note).  
 Louis XVII. See Dauphin.  
 — XVIII., 194-5, 197-8, 309, 340.  
 Lyons, 226.

## M.

Macpherson, Sir John, 163, 292, 326.  
 Maison Mallet, 2.  
 Maistre, Joseph de, 161, 250, 351, 355.  
 Mallet, Étienne, 4.  
 — Henri, 330.  
 — Jacques (1), 2.  
 — Jean, 1.  
 — John Lewis. Preface, and see *Reminiscences*.  
 Mallet du Pan, Jacques, 1749-1800. Ancestors, 1, 3. Birth, 5. Championship of the *Natifs*, 10. Acquaintance with Voltaire, 12. Professorship at Cassel, 12. Marriage, 13. *Doutes sur l'éloquence*, 14. Assists Linguet with *Annales Politiques*, 17. Ideal as Journalist, 18. Religious opinions, 22 (note). Carries on *Annales* alone, 20-51. Action in Genevese Revolution, 53. *Mémoires historiques*, 55. Offered Editorship of *Mercure de France* (*Journal politique*): Life in Paris, 61. Comments on English affairs, and Warren Hastings' trial, 67-72. Private Notebook, 77. His political education before 1789

- (Taine), 84. Reorganises *Mercure*, 89. His analysis of Debates, 90. Champions Constitutional Royalist Party, 92. Love of music, 101. Threatened, 102. Friendship with Malouet, visits Geneva, 107. Opinion of Necker, 109; of Mirabeau, 110. Domiciliary visit, 115. Defends Clergy, 116. Deprecates outrages, 118. Second attack and suspension of work, 120. Resumes Editorship, 123. Deputation of *émigrés*; adviser to Louis XVI. on question of War, 135. Combats War, 138. Fresh attacks, 143. Abandons *Mercure*, 145. Mission from King, *ibid.*; goes to Frankfort, 146. Presentation to Sovereigns, 149. Conferences with Ministers, *ibid.* His instructions, 151. At Geneva and Lausanne, 159. Goes to Brussels, 162. Relations with Foreign Ministers, 163. Siege of Valenciennes, *ibid.* Publication of *Considerations on the Revolution*, 164. Fury of *émigrés*, 169. Settles at Berne, 172. Notes to Elgin and Grenville, *ibid.* Further notes, 175. *Vienna Correspondence*, 186. Correspondence for Berlin and Lisbon, 186. Mission of Sainte-Aldegonde to Mallet, 195. His reply to the Princes, *ibid.* Attacked by ultra-Royalists, 198. Condemned to death at Geneva, 203. Pecuniary resources, 205. Occupations and society at Berne, 207. De Lameth intrigue, 210. Mallet's correspondents, 213. Description of France under Directory, 223. Criticism of Foreign Policy of Allies, 242; of the *émigrés*, 243. Advocates Constitutional Monarchy, 244. His War Policy, 246. Despair at Italian Campaign, 248. Second Pamphlet *Correspondance Politique*, etc., 250. *Lettre à un Ministre d'État*, 254. Controversy with Malouet, 257. Letter to *Quotidienne*, 267. Cause of his expulsion from Berne, 268. He seeks refuge at Friburg, 271. Intercourse with Portalis, 274. Decides to retire to England, 281. Arrival in London, 283. Letter to Gallatin, 288; *Tourment du Silence*, 291. Starts *Mercure Britannique*, 293. Neglect of Ministers, *ibid.* Success of new Journal, 300. Letter from Monsieur, 303. Collision with ultra-Royalists, 306. Interview with Monsieur, 309. Comments on Bonaparte's return, 315; and on the Consulate, 317. Health fails, 320. Letter to Wickham, 321. Gives up *Mercure*, 324. Death at Richmond, 327. Funeral, 329. Civil List Pension for widow, 329. Character of, by Madame Colladon, 330. Appearance and habits, 331. Vicissitudes of his reputation, 333. Carlyle's opinion, 335. Opinion of Taine, 338. Character of his mind, 338. His independence, 339. His political competence, Carlyle, 342. Taine, *ibid.* Gentz, 343. Sainte-Beuve, *ibid.* His style, 344. His opinions on the Revolution, 345. His anti-Jacobinism, 347. Attitude in the War, 348. His foresight, 350. Comparison with Rivarol and De Maistre, 351. His championship of Constitutional Monarchy justified, 353.
- Mallet du Pan, Madame, 13, 121 (note), 155, 330; Civil List Pension for, 329.
- Malouet, 92, 93, 102, 104, 135, 161, 216-8, 252 (note), 255, 256 (note), 257, 269, 292, 306, 307, 325, 329, 355.
- Mansfield, Lord, 69 (note).
- Marat, 122.
- Maret, 90.
- Maria Josepha (Lady Stanley), *Girlhood of*, 214, 215.
- Marie Antoinette, 81, 91, 133 (note). Execution of, 181 (note).
- Marmontel, 59, 62.
- Maurepas, 80.
- Maury, Abbé, afterwards Cardinal, 103.
- Mémoires Historiques Politiques et Littéraires*, 55.
- Mercure Britannique* founded, 290, 295. Objects of, 295. Temper of, 297-8. Articles in, 299, 301-2, 307, 316-8.
- Mercure de France*, 57, 59-61, 63, 64, 86, 89, 90, 102, 105 (note), 106, 122, 123 (note), 129, 131, 138, 139 (and note), 140, 141, 143, 144.
- Mercy Argenteau, Comte de, 150, 163, 169.
- Michel, M. André, 185 (note), 187 (note).
- Military aspect of American War, 46 (note).
- Dictatorship foretold, 139, 202, 253, 263.
- Mirabeau, 72, 85, 88, 97-8, 110-5.
- Moleville, Bertrand de, 145, 150.
- Monarchy, prophecy as to the, 202, 253, 353.
- Monsieur, Letters from, 282, 303. (See D'Artois.)

Montaigne, 122.  
Montesquieu, 7, 14, 26, 355.  
Montesquieu, 156, 158.  
Montgaillard, 198, 213.  
Montlosier, Comte de, 103, 161, 169, 218, 255, 292.  
Montmorin, Comte de, 76, 94, 132, 135, 136, 145. Fate of his family, 132-3 (note).  
Morris, Gouverneur, American Minister in Paris, 88 (note), 89, 91, 98, 103 (note), 137, 152, 154, 338, 350.  
Mounier, 92, 94, 102, 197, 210, 211, 216.  
Müller, 21 (note), 270.

## N.

Nantes, Edict of, 20.  
Narbonne, Comte Louis de, 133, 208.  
*Natifs*, 10.  
National character of French, 25, 83, 228, 337.  
Necker, 9, 17, 68, 91, 93, 94, 109, 110, 225, 339.  
North, Lord, 29, 44, 48.  
Notables, Assembly of, 79, 82.

## O.

*Observations historiques sur Paris* (Mallet du Pan's private notebook), 77-84.  
October 5th and 6th (1789), days of, 94, 100, 102, 121 (note).  
Opposition of Whig factions, 45, 47, 50.

## P.

Panat, Chevalier de, 161, 255.  
Panckoucke, 15, 16, 57-60.  
Patriotism of eighteenth century characterised, 252 (and note).  
Peace with America, 49, 50, 51.  
Pichegru, General, 213, 258, 260, 260-1 (note), 262.  
Pillnitz, Congress of, 128.  
Pitt, William, 29, 33, 67, 68, 164, 172, 175, 256, 284, 285, 294, 302.  
Poix, Prince de (Noailles), 198, 219, 255, 329.  
Polish Question, influence of on War, 171, 183.  
Political Economy, 17, 68.  
Pombal, 19, 265 (note).  
Portalis and his son, 273, 274, 275.  
— Letters from, 308.  
Portrait by Rigaud described, 320-1 (note).  
Pozzo di Borgo, 301.

Pradt, de, 191, 192, 221, 344.  
Princes, The French, relations of Mallet with, 146, 147, 161-2, 169, 194-7, 243, 303-4.  
Prisons under the Terror, 275-7.  
Public opinion, intolerance of, in Paris, 102, 115, 117, 143.

## Q.

Quiberon Expedition, 199, 242.  
*Quotidienne*, three letters to, 267.

## R.

Radstadt, 278.  
Reeves, John, 281, 291.  
*Reminiscences* by J. L. Mallet, Preface x., 4, 11, 12, 19 (note), 23 (note), 24 (note), 59, 62, 99, 100, 101, 107, 155, 156-8, 159-60, 203, 204, 205-7, 208, 209, 211, 212, 217, 218, 255, 258, 260 (and note), 268-9, 271-2, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278-9, 281-2, 283, 287, 292, 293-5, 299, 300-1, 304, 305 (note), 306-8, 320 (note), 321, 325, 326, 330.  
Retz, Cardinal de, 147.  
Revolution, Characteristics of French, 298-9 (note).  
Rewbell, 224.  
Richelieu, Duc de, 196.  
Richmond, death at, 326-7.  
Rigaud, J. F., R.A., 292, 320 (note).  
Rivarol, 337, 338, 345, 351.  
Robespierre, 124, 127, 134; described by Mallet, 179-80.  
Rockingham, Lord, 40.  
Rodney, 19, 30.  
Romilly, Sir S., 19 (note), 88.  
Rosebery, Lord, 284.  
Rousseau, 6, 8, 9, 26, 27, 86-7, 355, 358 (Appendix).  
Royalists, attitude of Mallet towards, 146-7, 348. (See also under "Princes" and "Emigration".)  
Royer-Collard, 259, 354.

## S.

Sainte-Aldegonde, Comte François de, 195, 198, 219-20. Letters to, 199, 201, 259, 262, 270, 279, 282 (note), 285, 309.  
Sainte-Beuve, 312 (note), 336, 343, 344, 350.  
St. Ouen, declaration of, 1814, 196.  
Saladin, 257 (note), 292.  
Sales, Marquis de, 160, 186 (note).  
Sartoris, Laura, 2.



Sartoris, Léonard, 2.  
 Saussure, de, 7.  
 Sayous, 338.  
 Sections, The 48, of Paris, 178, 201.  
 Seeley, Professor, 30, 31.  
 Sheffield, Lord, 214, 329.  
 Shelburne, Lord, 48, 49.  
 Sieyès, 190, 238, 311-4.  
 Smith, Adam, 33, 68.  
 Sorel, M. Albert, 130 (note), 151 (note).  
 Souza-Cotinho, Don Roderigo de, 186.  
 Spain, 33.  
 Staël, Madame de, 133 (and note), 208, 110 (note), 345.  
 States-General, 82, 83, 85.  
 Steiguer, Avoyer de, 268.  
 Suard, 57, 59, 62.  
 Sumarau, Baron de, 272.  
 Switzerland, Conquest of (1798), 278-80. *Destruction of Helvetic Confederacy, Essay*, 299-300.

## T.

Taine, 28, 84, 90, 187, 237 (note), 334, 336, 338, 342-3, 344, 347.  
 Talleyrand, 81, 223 (note).  
 Tallien, 190.  
 Terror, 90. Reign of, 178.  
 Theatre in Geneva, 8.  
 Thermidorians, 190-1, 199.  
 Thouret, 128.  
 Thugut, Count, 171, 241, 271.  
 Thureau-Dangin, P., 198 (note), 202, 336.  
*Times, The*, obituary notice of Mallet du Pan, 327 (note).  
 Trevor, Mr., British Minister at Turin, 160, 209, 329.  
 Turgot, 17.  
 Turin Correspondence, 186.

## V.

Valenciennes, Siege of, 163.  
 Valette, M. Gaspard, 334.  
 Varennes, Flight to, 119, 124.  
 Vendémiaire, 13th day of, 201.

Vergennes, 75, 76, 78, 80.  
 Verona, Declaration of (1795), 195, 196, 250.  
 Versailles Library, 80.  
 Vienna Correspondence, 185-7; Directory described in, 222 *sqq.*  
 Vignet, Sardinian Minister at Berne, 209.  
 Voltaire, 7, 8, 9, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 289, 357 (Appendix).

## W.

War and Commerce, Union of, 32.  
 War of Independence, 28 *sqq.*, 46 (note).  
 War with Austria, Approach of, 108, 128-9. Attitude of Europe, 129. Of Assembly and Girondins, 133. Of Royalists, 133. Of Robespierre and Danton, 184. Of the King and his advisers, 134-5. Opposition of Mallet du Pan to, 138-41.  
 War, The Revolutionary, Opening of, 155. Character of, 163, 175, 177, 184. Character of under Directory, 238 *sqq.* Policy of Mallet du Pan, 182-3, 243-9, 348-50. Policy of Allies, 171-2, 182-4, 241-2, 245-6. *Émigrés*, 242-3. Italian Campaign, 249.  
 Washington, George, 319.  
 Wealth of Great Britain, 42.  
 Westphalia, Peace of, 50.  
 Wickham, Mr., British Minister at Berne, 172, 211, 212, 278, 281, 292. Letter of Mallet to, 321-5.  
 Wilberforce, 66.  
 Windham, William, 257 (note), 281, 293, 294.

## Y.

Yorktown, Surrender of, 29.

## Z.

Zürich, 271.

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## CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
BADMINTON LIBRARY (THE) -	12	MENTAL, MORAL, AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY -	17
BIOGRAPHY, PERSONAL MEMOIRS, &c. -	9	MISCELLANEOUS AND CRITICAL WORKS -	38
CHILDREN'S BOOKS -	32	POETRY AND THE DRAMA -	23
CLASSICAL LITERATURE, TRANSLATIONS, ETC. -	22	POLITICAL ECONOMY AND ECONOMICS -	20
COOKERY, DOMESTIC MANAGEMENT, &c. -	36	POPULAR SCIENCE -	30
EVOLUTION, ANTHROPOLOGY, &c. -	21	RELIGION, THE SCIENCE OF -	21
FICTION, HUMOUR, &c. -	25	SILVER LIBRARY (THE) -	33
FUR, FEATHER AND FIN SERIES -	15	SPORT AND PASTIME -	12
FINE ARTS (THE) AND MUSIC -	36	STONYHURST PHILOSOPHICAL SERIES -	19
HISTORY, POLITICS, POLITY, POLITICAL MEMOIRS, &c. -	3	TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE, THE COLONIES, &c. -	11
LANGUAGE, HISTORY AND SCIENCE OF -	20	WORKS OF REFERENCE -	31
LOGIC, RHETORIC, PSYCHOLOGY, &c. -	17		

## INDEX OF AUTHORS AND EDITORS.

	Page		Page		Page		Page
Abbott (Evelyn) -	3, 22	Banks (M. M.) -	24	Campbell (Rev. Lewis) -	21, 22	Daughlish (M. G.) -	9
— (J. H. M.) -	3	Baring-Gould (Rev. S.) -	21, 38	Camperdown (Earl of) -	9	Davidson (A. M. C.) -	22
— (T. K.) -	17, 18	Barnett (S. A. and H.) -	20	Chasseloup - Laubat (Marquis de) -	13	— (W. L.) -	17, 20, 21
— (E. A.) -	17	Baynes (T. S.) -	38	Chesney (Sir G.) -	3	Davies (J. F.) -	22
Acland (A. H. D.) -	17	Beaconsfield (Earl of) -	25	Childe-Pemberton (W. S.) -	9	Dent (C. T.) -	14
Acton (Eliza) -	36	Beaufort (Duke of) -	13, 14	Cholmondeley-Pennell (Christie) -	13	De Salis (Mrs.) -	36
Adeane (J. H.) -	17	Becker (W. A.) -	22	— (H.) -	13	De Tocqueville (A.) -	4
Adelborg (O.) -	32	Beesly (A. H.) -	9	Christie (R. C.) -	38	Devas (C. S.) -	19, 20
Æschylus -	22	Bell (Mrs. Hugh) -	23	Churchill (W. Spencer) -	4, 25	Dickinson (G. L.) -	4
Ainger (A. C.) -	14	Bent (J. Theodore) -	11	Cicero -	22	— (W. H.) -	38
Albemarle (Earl of) -	13	Besant (Sir Walter) -	3	Clarke (Rev. R. F.) -	19	Dougall (L.) -	25
Alcock (C. W.) -	15	Bickerdyke (J.) -	14, 15	Climenson (E. J.) -	20	Dowden (E.) -	40
Allen (Grant) -	30	Bird (G.) -	23	Clodd (Edward) -	21, 30	Doyle (Sir A. Conan) -	25
Allgood (G.) -	3	Blackburne (J. H.) -	15	Clutterbuck (W. J.) -	12	Du Bois (W. E. B.) -	5
Alverstone (Lord) -	15	Bland (Mrs. Hubert) -	24	Colenso (R. J.) -	36	Dufferin (Marquis of) -	14
Angwin (M. C.) -	36	Blount (Sir E.) -	9	Conington (John) -	23	Dunbar (Mary F.) -	23
Anstey (F.) -	25	Boase (Rev. C. W.) -	6	Conway (Sir W. M.) -	14	Dyson (E.) -	26
Aristophanes -	22	Boedder (Rev. B.) -	19	Conybeare (Rev. W. J.) -	6		
Aristotle -	17	Brassey (Lady) -	11	— & Howson (Dean) -	33	Ebrington (Viscount) -	15
Armstrong (W.) -	13	— (Lord) -	14	Coolidge (W. A. B.) -	11	Ellis (J. H.) -	15
Arnold (Sir Edwin) -	11, 23	Bray (C.) -	3	Corbett (Julian S.) -	4	— (R. L.) -	17
— (Dr. T.) -	23	Bright (Rev. J. F.) -	3	Coutts (W.) -	22	Erasmus -	9
Ashbourne (Lord) -	3	Brodfoot (Major W.) -	13	Coventry (A.) -	14	Evans (Sir John) -	38
Ashby (H.) -	36	Brooks (H. J.) -	17	Cox (Harding) -	13		
Ashley (W. J.) -	3, 20	Brown (A. F.) -	32	Crake (Rev. A. D.) -	32	Falkiner (C. L.) -	4
Avebury (Lord) -	21	— (J. Moray) -	14	Craven (W. G.) -	14	Farrar (Dean) -	20, 26
Ayre (Rev. J.) -	31	Bruce (R. I.) -	3	Crawford (J. H.) -	25	Fitzgibbon (M.) -	4
		Bryce (J.) -	14	— (R.) -	11	Fitzmaurice (Lord E.) -	4
Bacon -	9, 17	Buck (H. A.) -	14	Creed (S.) -	25	Folkard (H. C.) -	13
Bagehot (W.) -	9, 20, 38	Buckland (Jas.) -	32	Creighton (Bishop) -	4, 6, 9	Ford (H.) -	16
Bagwell (R.) -	25	Buckle (H. T.) -	3	Crozier (J. B.) -	9, 17	— (W. J.) -	16
Bailey (H. C.) -	25	Bull (T.) -	36	Custance (Col. H.) -	15	Fountain (P.) -	11
Baillie (A. F.) -	3	Burke (U. R.) -	3	Cutts (Rev. E. L.) -	6	Fowler (Edith H.) -	26
Bain (Alexander) -	17	Burns (C. L.) -	36			Francis (Francis) -	16
Baker (J. H.) -	38	Burrows (Montagu) -	6	Dabney (J. P.) -	23	Francis (M. E.) -	26
— (Sir S. W.) -	11	Butler (E. A.) -	30	Dale (L.) -	4	Freeman (Edward A.) -	6
Balfour (A. J.) -	13, 21			— (T. F.) -	14	Fremantle (T. F.) -	16
— (Lady Betty) -	6	Cameron of Lochiel -	15	Dallinger (F. W.) -	5	Fresfield (D. W.) -	14
Ball (John) -	11					Frost (G.) -	38

# INDEX OF AUTHORS AND EDITORS—continued.

	Page		Page		Page		Page
Froude (James A.)	4, 9, 11, 26	Kant (I.)	-	Nesbit (E.)	-	Sophocles	-
Fuller (F. W.)	-	Kaye (Sir J. W.)	-	Nettlehipp (R. L.)	-	Soulisby (Lucy H.)	-
Furneaux (W.)	-	Keary (C. F.)	-	Newman (Cardinal)	-	Southey (R.)	-
	30	Keller (A. G.)	-	Nichols (F. M.)	-	Spahr (C. B.)	-
Gardiner (Samuel R.)	5	Kelly (E.)	-	Ogilvie (R.)	-	Spedding (J.)	-
Gathorne-Hardy (Hon. A. E.)	-	Kent (C. B. R.)	-	Oldfield (Hon. Mrs.)	-	Spender (A. E.)	-
	15, 16	Kerr (Rev. J.)	-	Onslow (Earl of)	-	Stanley (Bishop)	-
Geikie (Rev. Cunningham)	-	Killick (Rev. A. H.)	-	Osbourne (L.)	-	Stebbing (W.)	-
	38	Kitchin (Dr. G. W.)	6	Packard (A. S.)	-	Steel (A. G.)	-
Gibbons (J. S.)	-	Knight (E. F.)	-	Paget (Sir J.)	-	Stephen (Leslie)	-
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Goethe	-	Ladd (G. T.)	-	Payne-Gallwey (Sir R.)	-	Stevens (R. W.)	-
Gore-Booth (Sir H. W.)	14	Lang (Andrew)	6, 14, 16, 21, 23, 27, 32, 39	Pearson (C. H.)	-	Stevenson (R. L.)	25, 28, 33
Graham (A.)	-	Lapsley (G. T.)	5	Peck (Hedley)	-	Storr (F.)	-
— (P. A.)	-	Lascelles (Hon. G.)	13, 15	Pemberton (W. S. Childen)	-	Stuart-Wortley (A. J.)	-
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